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United Presb. Ch. U.S.A.

A Working Paper for Study

Not to be Interpreted as the Policy of the Commission

PREFACE

This document is exactly what its name implies, *An Advisory Study*.

It is a study made by fifteen persons drawn from churches around the world, and is intended to advise the Commission on Ecumenical Mission and Relations of The United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.

The Committee began its study in January, 1960 and completed it in September, 1961, when this Report was presented to the Commission. The manner in which it came into existence and the way in which the study was conducted are outlined in an introductory statement prepared by the Committee itself.

The Commission, which created the Committee, has exercised extreme care in order to give the Committee complete freedom without undue influence by the Commission's own policies and plans. The resources of the Commission were available to the Committee, but the Committee has made its own choices and has drawn its own conclusions.

In like manner, the Commission has been careful to preserve its own freedom to receive the Report, study it, and to accept or reject its recommendations. This Report, therefore, is a study document and should not be considered as a statement of Commission policy.

Nevertheless, as we set ourselves to study the Report, several comments may be in order.

The international character of the Committee, with major emphasis upon members from churches outside the United States, has brought freshness and variety to the Report, and a viewpoint not found in similar documents that have come to our attention. This variety is evident in the varying styles in the different sections of the Report. They bear the internal evidence of being composed by people of different cultural backgrounds. No attempt has been made to edit out these differences. The Report stands as it came from the hands of the Committee.

The Committee proved to have particular competence in a variety of disciplines. There were theologians, sociologists, educators, and ministers. Its theologians were balanced by competent laymen who insisted that what was written be understandable and practical. The Report itself was not intended to be completely comprehensive or exhaustive, but a sufficient number of areas are covered with competence so as to stimulate further exploration.

In its meetings, the Committee soon demonstrated that it had become a community of Christians working together and seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The Committee believes that its work will be successful only if it results in other small groups of Christians across the world studying the mission of the church and seeking God's guidance in planning and working together.

Out of the Committee's study of its task, as reflected in the Bible, came the brief theological section, which is Part One. The Committee notes that readers should begin with this section, for it believes that the theological section and the practical section in Part Two are a whole

and that readers will misunderstand the practical recommendations if they are not read from the perspective set forth in Part One.

It is the intent of the Commission to study this Report, to share it with churches in the U.S.A. and with sister churches in other parts of the world. Our purpose is to discover what God is saying to us in this Report about our common task in the church's mission and to plan our future program accordingly.

We are thankful to the Committee members for the zeal and intelligence with which they have undertaken their task and the substantial contribution which they have already made to our thinking. We believe that this Report may be profitable beyond the bounds of the Commission's direct responsibilities. At the suggestion of many friends of other communions, we are making it available for wider use.

JOHN COVENTRY SMITH
General Secretary

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

Two streams of influence converged to produce the Advisory Study Committee. One was the Christ-dedicated vision of Dr. Charles T. Leber. The other was a sequence of events which created the Commission on Ecumenical Mission and Relations.

Dr. Leber, the first General Secretary of the Commission on Ecumenical Mission and Relations, was a restless spirit, ever seeking more effectively to proclaim Christ as the rightful and only Lord of all life. He constantly sought to focus the attention and work of other Christians, and of the church as a whole, upon this same goal. Acutely sensitive to the significance of contemporary world-wide change, Dr. Leber realized that the ways of communicating the gospel must match the times. Because of his pioneering efforts to relate the church's missionary thrust to the revolutionary age, his leadership came to be recognized by his own denomination, by other confessions, and by ecumenical bodies.

The Lake Mohonk Consultation, April 22 to May 5, 1956, called and led by Dr. Leber under the authority of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., undertook to examine anew the place of the church in the fulfillment of Christ's mission in this period in history. The Consultation was attended by churchmen from fifteen nations of Latin America, Asia, and Africa, who represented church bodies related to the Presbyterian Church in mission. Through their representatives at Lake Mohonk, younger churches were afforded opportunity freely to express their most deeply felt needs, within the fellowship of, and under the scrutiny of, sister churches. The participants were reminded that the primary responsibility for the evangelization of each area of the world rests upon the indigenous church of Christ in that area, and of the correlative obligation of each church body to engage in Christian witness in every area of the world.

The recommendations and follow-up of the Consultation were interpreted by some to imply that increased personnel and funds would enable the church to effect optimum witness and to regain lost mission momentum. By 1958 the fallacy of this inference was apparent. Drastic changes in the utilization of resources, as well as increases in their amounts, were seen to be essential to the maximum proclamation of the gospel to the rapidly changing world. Seeking a more adequate ecumenical Christian witness, Dr. Leber proposed that a cross section of churchmen — members principally of overseas churches, and principally laymen — be invited to study the missionary situation which confronted and challenged the new United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.

A sequence of events constituted the second of the two streams which converged to effect the formation of the Advisory Study Committee. The United Presbyterian Church of North America and the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. were merged on May 28, 1958, to form The United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. The two boards of foreign missions and the three agencies of the two uniting churches responsible

for interchurch relations were combined at the time of union. The responsibilities and functions of these five agencies of the two uniting churches were assigned to a single agency, the Commission on Ecumenical Mission and Relations.

Each of the major words in the name is important. "Commission" signifies that through this agency The United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. itself acts in the assigned spheres of church life and witness. "Ecumenical" describes the nature both of the mission of the church and of her relations. At least in theory, both "Mission" and "Relations" extend to every point of the inhabited earth. "Mission" is singular in form to focus attention upon the "calling" of the church within the world rather than upon the historic engagement of the churches in "missions." Ecumenical "Relations" indicates that The United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. is related through Christ to all other groups of Christian believers through the world, and also to those Christians who are not joined with fellow Christians in church organizations. All Christians, as members of the Body of Christ, are related in his gathering of the children of God from the ends of the earth into fellowship for witness and service.

At the initial meeting of the Commission on Ecumenical Mission and Relations, and at subsequent meetings, members of the Commission expressed the conviction that the task of the new body should be given careful study. This feeling was shared by the executive staff of the Commission, and the Commission assigned to a special committee, under the chairmanship of Dr. Henry P. Van Dusen, the responsibility of preparing for such study. This resulted in an invitation to fifteen members from the world-wide church to constitute a study group which came to be known as the Advisory Study Committee.

The Commission on Ecumenical Mission and Relations is convinced that to act unilaterally in mission at this stage in world history would be presumptuous. Charged only with responsibility for aspects of ecumenical mission and relations undertaken by the United Presbyterian Church, the Commission is aware that it requires for its evidence the insights of other church bodies which share in world-wide mission. The membership of the Advisory Study Committee, therefore, was constituted in such manner as to secure a cross section representation of churches from around the world, including both those with which the United Presbyterian Church is related in mission, and also others to which she is related only through the World Presbyterian Alliance or the World Council of Churches.

Ten of the fifteen Committee members are citizens of countries other than the United States. Five of them are from Asia, two from Africa, two from Latin America, and one from Europe. Two members of the Committee are missionaries, one being resident in Asia and the other in Latin America. Three are, or were at the time of their selection, members of the Commission. Three are women. Ten are lay people

who are engaged either professionally or non-professionally in various phases of the life and work of the Church in the world. The five members who are ordained ministers represent the administrative, educational, pastoral, and theological services of their respective communions.

The Committee was requested to consider the question: "What are the policies which should determine the participation of The United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., through its Commission on Ecumenical Mission and Relations, in ecumenical mission and relations during the years immediately ahead?"

Importance attaches to the procedures followed by the Committee in pursuit of its task:

(a) An initial meeting of the Committee was held at Stony Point, New York in January, 1960. This meeting gave opportunity for members of the Committee to be briefed concerning the nature and work of the Commission and to outline their own service on behalf of the Commission over a suggested period of two years.

At this first meeting a program of observation and inquiry visits by Committee members to twenty-two "related" younger churches was planned, these visits to take place chiefly as members were en route to or from meetings of the Committee.

The second plenary meeting of the Committee was held in Asmara, Eritrea, Ethiopia, in March of 1961. The third and final meeting of the Committee was held in September of 1961.

(b) From the beginning to the end of its work the Committee has endeavored to relate its study to the biblical concept of mission. If this purpose has been fulfilled in the report and recommendations of the Committee, credit should be given to the authors of numerous books, brochures, reports, and articles on the general subject of the theological and biblical basis of mission which have been published in recent years, or which have been made available privately to members of the Committee for study. Both the quantity and the quality of the thinking that has been, and is being, done in the field of the mission of the church is impressive.

As members of the Committee acquainted themselves with some of this wealth of material available for study, it became increasingly evident that Christian people around the world can find inspiration in the many biblical concepts that will enrich the church's understanding of her mission in and to the world today. Therefore, the first unanimous conviction to emerge within the Committee concerned involvement of the "related" churches in study of the subject of the nature and mission of the church in our time. To this end the Committee prepared for circulation to the churches two documents: an Introductory Statement describing its work and a Preliminary Study Paper, with suggested readings in the field of the theology of mission.

(c) A number of the "related" churches responded to the challenge to self-appraisal, set up study committees of their own, produced a

number of valuable reports, and shared these with the Advisory Study Committee. The informational and analytical material sent to the Committee by the churches and the oral and written reports from observation tours presented by Committee members provided the background for the second meeting in Asmara, at which principles proposed for incorporation in the Committee's report were discussed, debated, and tentatively formulated. Joint meetings with fourteen of the Commission's representatives, assembled from various parts of the world, proved profitable as these afforded members of the Committee opportunity for rechecking impressions gained in travel and study.

(d) The final meeting of the Committee in Evanston, Illinois has been the culmination of a process of drafting a general report, with a supplement of specific recommendations, for submission to the Commission on Ecumenical Mission and Relations.

The Committee is aware of the limitations that apply both to its work and to the resultant report. Members have been able to contribute only limited amounts of time, since they were carrying full-time responsibilities in their normal occupations. The report does not presume to add anything new to the current world-wide study of the nature and mission of the church. Many principles of value enunciated in the report may have been stated with better insight and clarity by one or more of the able and distinguished writers who have dealt with the same subjects in recent years. It is hoped, however, that the report, coming as it does from a rank and file cross section of Christians from churches across the world, may provoke among their counterpart members in these and other churches a desire to know what the Spirit of God is saying to the church in our time.

The mind of Christ, as revealed in Scripture, in past and current history, and in the contemporary experience of the ecumenical church, can be known only by those who diligently seek to know. All fellow-Christians to whom this report may come are urgently invited to join in continued study of the mission of the church today in a changing, confused, fearful, and divided world. And blessed will be those who not only *find* the mind of Christ through seeking, but who also *do* the will of the Father.

All members of the Committee are grateful to the Commission on Ecumenical Mission and Relations for the privilege of participation in the study. For stimulating its purposeful thinking, the Committee is indebted to many authors and lecturers, some of whose names are listed in the accompanying bibliography. For inspiring counsel along the way, the Committee wishes to thank members of the executive staff of the Commission, and particularly Dr. John C. Smith, who has served as the liaison officer between the Commission and the Advisory Study Committee.

Notes

The terms "younger churches" and "older churches" are used in the Report as the most convenient possible means of differentiating between those churches whose existence began during the period of the modern missionary movement and those other churches of longer existence which have provided resources for missionary service during the same period.

The term "related churches" is used to indicate those "younger churches" in whose coming into existence the United Presbyterian Church has shared, and with whom there is still maintained a relationship in mission.

The terms "mother" and "daughter," applied to churches, are used in the Report as the most convenient possible means of indicating a relationship between two churches when one church has shared in the origin of the other.

It is not intended that any term used in connection with churches should ever imply any disparity. A church which has come into existence under the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit is just as truly a church in all essential aspects of its life the first day of its existence as is any church at any period in its life.

Quotations from the Bible are from *The New English Bible*, Oxford University Press, Cambridge University Press, 1961, unless otherwise noted.

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AN ADVISORY STUDY

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AN ADVISORY STUDY

PART ONE

CAPTIVES IN CHRIST'S TRIUMPHAL PROCESSION

Introduction

We are living in an unprecedented situation in which world-shaking events which affect radically almost every area of life are taking place with bewildering rapidity. The former foundations are profoundly shaken; no one is quite sure what will remain. We have come to the end of an era, a transition point where an ultimate decision has to be made. The old is rapidly passing away; the new is yet obscure. There is an unheard of degree of rising mass expectation on the one hand, and on the other, equally widespread uncertainty, confusion, fear, and even despair — an extraordinary mixture of fear and hope. The whole world senses the undeniable fact that it stands in a crisis in which an unprecedented opportunity for the advancement and enrichment of mankind and the danger of total annihilation are both before us in an inescapable way. Such a world is constantly facing revolutions; in fact, it would be truer to say that the world itself is in revolution. We should not be surprised if, in face of this situation, our former ways of thinking and patterns of action are seriously being called into question.

With these foundation-shaking events, it is inevitable that the missionary enterprise should be affected, for its development during the last one hundred and fifty years has taken place in the lands of Asia, Africa, and Latin America where these revolutionary changes have been most acutely felt. Some doors have been completely closed; others, in areas of tension, may soon be shut. There are violent criticisms without and a great deal of uncertainty, confusion, and self-distrust within. It is becoming more and more evident that simply due to the pressures of the world, we can no longer go about the missionary task as before. But more serious and more important is the pressure from within which is manifest in radical self-criticism and in the conviction that we have come to the end of an era. We cannot escape this fact but must face it honestly and respond to its challenge. We have to ask ourselves in all humility: Is this the pressure of the world alone, or is it also and primarily the pressure of the Spirit? We have to remember that God, if he is the true God and not an idol, is the *Living God* — he who acts in history and in the world. Confronted by the foundation-shaking events of our time, we may lose faith in our one foundation — the eternal rock of the Living God. Or in these same events, we may be led to a renewed vision and awareness of this one foundation which abides forever. We may discover that in the midst of and behind all the revolutionary encounters and challenges of our time, we enter into encounter with

the Living God and the challenge which is presented by his unalterable will. We may see him working not only with his right hand but also with his left (Job 23:9), so that those who sit on the left in opposition may, nevertheless, represent His Majesty's opposition, ultimately involved in His Majesty's service.

Our most pressing responsibility is to find our bearings. If our trust is not in ourselves but in God alone, we are called to discern more clearly what he is doing in the events of the modern world, to acknowledge humbly that his ways are not necessarily our ways nor his thoughts our thoughts, and thus be enabled to follow the direction which is defined for us by his mysterious yet gracious activity, in which we are led to see what the Lord of the Church is calling us to do. Speaking in biblical terms, this is a question of discernment which we must attempt at all times: to discern the Scriptures; to discern the Body of Christ, his church; to discern the signs of the times. We rejoice in and gratefully acknowledge the vigorous beginnings of this three-fold discernment going on at many points in the life and mission of the church.

The living God is the God of a living church. It is only along this narrow path of disciplined and faithful discernment that His people will be led to a wider vision and to joyful obedience. As we are enabled to comprehend the new creation which has come through the gracious activity of the Triune God, we hear his call to live and serve as a grateful and expectant community, the firstfruits of this new creation.

In wrestling with our task of mission and its, humanly speaking, almost insurmountable problems, we are struck again and again by the essential similarities and the existential differences between the church of the New Testament in its world and our church in the world of today. This may become clear as we consider three examples of the process of discernment in which we invite you to participate. In these we see the Triune God at work in and through his church.

Picture One – The Risen Christ. Imagine a handful of men assembled in a house (*oikos*) “behind locked doors.” The house is set in another larger *oikos* (a city), and that within a still larger *oikos* (the nation or the world). They are assembled there for fear of their hostile fellowmen and of hostile political powers. They are afraid of even greater enemies within: betrayal, doubt, confusion, and uncertainty, for their cause seems to be a lost one. They will see “Him” no more for he has gone from them. He is dead, crucified on the shameful cross, and buried. Were his last words on the cross not these: “It is finished”? It is all over. Darkness without; darkness within. They have assembled behind locked doors perhaps out of lingering sentimentality for the dead Master, perhaps in order to wind up their business and quietly disperse.

Then something totally unexpected happened: Jesus came and stood among them. Yes, Jesus had risen from the dead. Otherwise, for nearly two thousand years both they and we and the cloud of witnesses in between have lived and died for an illusion. Is this foundation, the reality of the risen Christ in the life of the church, shaken by the events

of our time? If it is, there is no point in discussing mission. No one can long live by an illusion, much less die for it, but if He has risen and lives among us we have the one permanent foundation which was laid for mission and is valid for all time.

His first words, then as now, to those assembled behind locked doors because of any type of fear, are: "Peace be with you." Whenever this word is heard afresh, fear is replaced by joy, for his pierced hands and side and his death on the cross signify something totally different from what was first imagined. They no longer inspire fear, but rather joy and peace.

A second consequence follows immediately. Fear separates, even behind locked doors in the same house, while the peace which comes through seeing the pierced hands and side in a new light, unites. With the word of peace pronounced by the risen Lord, the *oikos* with its locked doors becomes a true household once again, a home filled with joy, a community with its inner cohesion and harmony restored. This is precisely what has happened again and again in the course of history. A community with this new cohesion and harmony must be an open community with a clearly defined purpose. The command to "go" came when the word of peace was repeated for the second time: "Peace be with you! As the Father sent me, so I send you" (John 20:21).

Late that evening behind locked doors, a new community, born out of peace and for peace, took shape. A handful of fear-stricken and disillusioned fishermen was transformed into a missionary community (John 20:19-23). The one ground for this transformation was and is the living and risen Christ.

Picture Two — The Driving Wind of the Holy Spirit. We meet the disciples again in Jerusalem in the upper room, now an assembled brotherhood of about one hundred twenty, constantly at prayer together (a worshipping community). They are no longer a fearful but an expectant community, discussing this ministry of witness to His resurrection.

On the day of Pentecost they were all together in one place when suddenly a "strong driving wind" filled the whole house and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to talk. They were planning to choose *one* to join this ministry but the Holy Spirit filled them *all* and transformed them into a fearless witnessing community. This is how the missionary movement of the church began. Now it is the people of Jerusalem who are bewildered and amazed and exclaim in their astonishment, "How has this happened?" There is no other driving force for mission beyond that which is given by the power of the Holy Spirit. If we are expecting it from any other source today we shall wait in vain.

This picture which is valid for the New Testament Church is also valid for the church of all ages and in all places. If we think otherwise, the foundation of the church has been shaken by the events of our time. What we have here is a witnessing community, driven by the mighty winds of the Holy Spirit, constantly moving outward into wider and wider circles, and going beyond boundaries into new *oikoi*, starting

from Jerusalem and going to Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth.

Another amazing aspect of this picture is that the peace which the risen Christ gave to the community now spreads and is received by those "drawn from every nation . . . each one heard . . . in his own language" (Acts 2:5-6). The process set in motion with the Tower of Babel has now been reversed as the fullness of Christ's peace fills up each nation, comes into each culture, and unites men with each other. The New Testament Church sees in Christ the promise to Abraham reaching fulfillment: "In you all nations shall find blessing." The objective is that the blessing of Abraham shall in Christ be extended unto the Gentiles (nations) so that all might receive the promised Spirit through faith (Galatians 3:14). Can we not see the signs of this filling and unifying power of Christ through his Spirit in every nation and language today? If not, are we perchance looking at the world as slaves of the spirit of the times rather than "through the eyes of faith"?

Picture Three — The Transcendent Power of God the Father. "We are no better than pots of earthenware to contain this treasure, and this proves that such transcendent power does not come from us, but is God's alone. Hard-pressed on every side, we are never hemmed in; bewildered, we are never at our wits' end; hunted, we are never abandoned to our fate; struck down, we are not left to die. Wherever we go we carry death with us in our body, the death that Jesus died, that in this body also life may reveal itself, the life that Jesus lives. For continually, while still alive, we are being surrendered into the hands of death, for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be revealed in this mortal body of ours" (II Corinthians 4:7-11).

The progression of God's mission in the world is not an easy one, nor is it always evident. In fact, very often it is hidden from our eyes; it goes contrary to human standards of progress and success. How can we expect otherwise when we are bidden to walk the way He walked, the way of suffering and of the cross? The Apostle Paul, who knew these difficulties, also wrote: "Thanks be to God, who continually leads us about, captives in Christ's triumphal procession, and everywhere uses us to reveal and spread abroad the fragrance of the knowledge of himself!" (II Corinthians 2:14).

What is the source of this fighting certainty of victory, this incomparable hope in spite of all things which, humanly speaking, are utterly contrary to this faith and hope? It is from that transcendent power of God (II Corinthians 4:5-7). Herein lies the absolute certainty that the battle is first of all God's and only thus ours; that the mission is God's mission and thus ours. It is this confidence in the God who spared not his own Son that makes it possible for us to go about our mission today with quietness and confidence; to accept the restrictions imposed upon us and not despair. It is this which frees the church, no matter how small it is or how overwhelming the opposition to it, for faithful witness where it is and even to the end of the world. But if we depart from this sole

ground of mission nothing can take its place and we will be completely defeated.

These three pictures confirm and strengthen the central affirmation of our faith that the sole ground of the life and mission of the church lies in the fundamental reality of the presence and the power of the Triune God in the world. It is this God who has revealed himself as a missionary God. It is he who, in his Son and through the Holy Spirit, has decided in favor of man and is actively involved in our salvation.

I. Jesus Christ — God's "YES" Pronounced Upon the World

In the midst of all the ambiguities of human life and history, that strange mixture of "Yes" and "No" in which we are caught every day, the God who meets us in Christ has pronounced once for all a clear and decisive "Yes" for the world. "The Son of God, Christ Jesus, proclaimed among you by us . . . , was never a blend of Yes and No. With him it was, and is, Yes. He is the Yes pronounced upon God's promises, every one of them" (II Corinthians 1:19-20). This is the Good News: "When anyone is united to Christ, there is a new world (creation); the old order has gone, and a new order has already begun . . . God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself" (II Corinthians 5:17-19).

God has worked, with infinite patience and long-suffering, to make real this eternal "Yes" for his whole creation.

In the face of Jesus Christ we know why we are estranged. God wills to be the center of man's life, which then becomes a life in freedom and love, a life in community, an abundant life. He places all the rest of creation at man's disposal and gives him dominion over it. He puts man in a garden, for He intends that man's world, his *oikos*, should be always like a garden. But something went wrong which disrupted man's social existence and put him outside the abundant life of the garden.

The clue to the human predicament was exposed and overcome at another garden, at the hour of testing of the Son of Man, when he prayed: "Father, if it be thy will, take this cup away from me. Yet *not my will but thine be done*" (Luke 22:42). The difference between him and us is the difference between a God-centered and an I-centered life, between the life which says: *Thy will be done*, and that which says: *My will be done*. The difference is total. This I-centered self is the old man doomed to death (Romans 7:24) both in its individual and corporate expression. It is THE disruptive force in man's existence in community, the force of destruction which leads straight to conflict and war, declared or undeclared. It is the "natural," or rather the unnatural, state of affairs in which each is for himself and so all are against all.

New Life in Christ. In Christ a new man is born, his is a God-centered life which is fulfilled in love that does not seek its own (I Corinthians

13). Christ, through his incarnate life as the suffering servant and through his death on the cross, lived this life of love and made it available to men. His resurrection is the divine demonstration that this new life is indestructible, for it is the life of the eternal Christ, the firstfruits from the dead (I Corinthians 15:20-23).

The purpose of Christ's mission is to *purify* the life of man of all its destructive self-centeredness and to *fill* it instead with the fullness of his life, which is love. This new life is offered to every man. It may be received or rejected. It confronts him with an inescapable choice. It is the choice between the old and the new humanity, between the old man who knows only a living death, and the new man who, though dying, knows eternal life. There is no other option. This human choice is set in a very special context. Behind it and above it, the final decision has already been made once for all by the "Yes" pronounced by God in Christ. The new world is already present here and now. The old order of self-centered bondage is already passing away. Out of this gracious indicative of God's mighty acts in the incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection, we hear the imperative: Be what you are in Christ.

New Life in Community in the World. Life as created in the image of God was life in community within the world. Our estranged existence is the disruption of all human relationships within all the structures of our common life. We are no longer in a garden paradise as intended by God, but rather in a world in which the original harmony of all the orders has been broken and poisoned by this sin of self-centeredness. Family and class, community and occupational group, nation and nations – all these are in conflict and tension with each other, at the same time that, within each order, divisions and struggles reign.

Man is involved in these orders and caught in the struggle between them which threatens to destroy him. At the same time, he contributes, by his own self-centeredness, to intensify the struggle which there goes on continually. Each of these structures, such as the family and community, is intended to be a means toward the fulfillment of human life. In reality this fulfillment is denied and all these orders are threatened with disintegration. It is this total situation in which we are caught which St. Paul describes as the kingdom of death (Romans 5), and which we are helpless to change.

Jesus Christ has broken the power of this kingdom. In the very center of these structures of human life a new humanity is taking form. The most remarkable and conspicuous manifestation of this new life hidden in Christ is the *new possibility of fulfillment which we now experience within the diverse forms of our social existence*. The new reality of forgiveness and love, operating in the world, not only reunites us with God and thus provides a new center for our whole personality; it also permeates each particular *oikos* in which we participate daily. Thus all our relationships with each other in the world are renewed. In family and at work, in community and nation, and the world of nations, we discover that a new relationship with others is possible. As the love of

God which filled Jesus Christ overflows into the world and fills each *oikos*, new possibilities for the fulfillment of human existence are within our reach in each order. We also discover that in our weakness we are being used to make this fulfillment possible for others. In each order of our life, we discover that "there is no such thing as Jew and Greek, slave and freeman, male and female; for you are all one person in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28). Sin continues to threaten all aspects of our life, but its power to maintain us in bondage and destroy us has been shattered.

This reconciling love of God not only fills each oikos; it also unites them all in one new household. Nation continues to fight against nation; classes and races are still divided; family and community live in tension with each other. But the supreme reality which has been manifested in Jesus Christ is that he is in all and over all. He has broken down the barriers which divide us and broken their power over us. His reconciling love is set loose in the world, uniting us in him. In Christ, diversity of thought patterns and attitudes, of cultural and social expressions, offer the possibility of a deeper human relationship and a constant source of mutual enrichment. "For he is himself our peace. Gentiles and Jews, he has made the two one, and in his own body of flesh and blood has broken down the enmity which stood like a dividing wall between them; for he annulled the law with its rules and regulations, so as to create out of the two a single new humanity in himself, thereby making peace" (Ephesians 2:14-15).

The new life in Christ has basically and essentially this double aspect: it is new life of sonship in the orders of our existence in the world, and it is brotherhood in one household of God. The life of the individual and of the community finds its authentic center and is free to fulfill its destiny — existence in and for community, in love and for love. This is why the *koinonia* is such a vital reality in the New Testament Church.

A Costly Gift. The divine "Yes" pronounced upon mankind is a free gift for anyone who is united with Christ through faith. It is also a *costly* gift, a fact which is constantly set before us throughout the New Testament. It has come to us through the death of Christ. The new world of which we have spoken cannot be born out of the old world. It is a new creation. Our estranged existence cannot be overcome by our self-centeredness. As love is the end, so love must be the means. God is under no obligation whatsoever to save us. On the contrary, we deserve death. If God shows us his love, it is in spite of our unworthiness and not because of any merit on our part. But if God is to love us and make his love real and effective for us, there is no other way than the way of Christ. The Word *must* become flesh, *must* take a form like that of our sinful nature (Romans 8:3). Christ *must* be made one with the sinfulness of men (II Corinthians 5:21). Christ himself said: the Son of Man *must* suffer and be put to death (Mark 8). This MUST is the awesome mystery of the eternal "Yes" pronounced by God upon man and the world. This is the way God actually made his love effective for us.

Speaking from a human point of view, this divine MUST is utterly incomprehensible and can only be seen as a scandal or foolishness. But those who have been apprehended by this love and understand its tremendous cost have no choice before them. It is for them the ultimate compulsion and motivation of mission. "Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel!" (I Corinthians 9:16 R.S.V.). As this love fills our whole being and opens a new life before us, we are caught up by it and led out into the world in mission.

The Cost of Obedience. This divine MUST also determines the direction of mission. The way of Christ in the world must be the way of the church in its mission to the world. The Son of God went into a far country to become the Son of Man. His Lordship is revealed in his complete solidarity and identification with the world which he came to redeem. This is the way Christ sends his church into the world of nations to be his Body, concretely and visibly. As the incarnate Christ is the missionary Lord, so only the "incarnate" church can be his missionary community.

Christ "came not to be served but to serve" (Mark 10:45 R.S.V.). The risen Lord sent his disciples into the world as a servant people. This is the most revolutionary directive ever given. Anyone who does not go in this form is not sent by Him. The church as the firstfruits of the kingdom is a people called to pay the price of taking upon themselves the needs, anxieties, and sufferings of their fellowmen in the world.

The risen Christ showed his hands and his side to his disciples and said: "As the Father sent me, so I send you" (John 20:21). The marks of suffering are the credentials of the resurrected life. The church participates in Christ's victory over the world as it shares in his suffering in and for the world.

The church is always tempted to forget the Way of Christ and follow the ways of the world. But as the crucified Lord is the Lord of the Church, he is always calling his people back to their vocation, and through the power of the Spirit, granting them the freedom to live as he lived and allow the power of God to move in their weakness.

II. The Church: Firstfruits of the New Humanity in and for the World

As we search the Scriptures to discern the true nature and purpose of the church we are impressed by the profusion of images used to describe this community. The very abundance shows that we cannot define the church, but merely describe it. All of these images point beyond the community itself to a far greater reality, that gracious "Yes" of the Triune God. This community is so caught up and apprehended by God's eternal affirmation that it literally becomes itself an integral part of the Good News. It is most urgent for the church so to be caught up once again into its mysterious dimension, lest it be limited by confining ecclesiastical structures.

If we would discover anew the true nature and purpose of this community in which we all participate, we must let the Scriptures reveal them to us. Though all of these images are interwoven and enrich our understanding of the transcendent quality of the church, we have chosen but one for our purpose here, since it has seemed especially challenging and relevant to our situation today. It is that of the church as the "firstfruits." This image communicates to us in a graphic way several aspects of the nature of this reality in which we are involved, which we consider to be of the utmost importance as we attempt to understand what we are and what we are called to do today.

The references to this image refer us back to the activity of the Triune God: it is *God* the Creator, *the Father* who "gave us birth to be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures" (James 1:18); the firstfruits is to whom "*The Spirit* is given" (Romans 8:23); it is to "*Christ* the firstfruits" that this image primarily refers (I Corinthians 15:20-23; Colossians 1:13-20). Thus the *church* is shown to be the area where God the Father is especially at work in the Son, through the Holy Spirit. It is a messianic community, where the Messiah reigns, and is acknowledged to be the Lord. It is the community of the Spirit, where He "comes to the aid of our weakness" and enables us to say and do what we of ourselves are unable to do (Romans 8).

The Sign of Triumphant Grace. The Christian proclamation is not a mere presentation of a theory about God and his relationship to the world; it is not simply an affirmation that God has acted in favor of men. The firstfruits of this redemptive activity have already appeared in the Christian community and it is within this context that the gospel is preached. In each nation or *oikos* the church as the firstfruits makes visible something of what the new order of life in Christ means for all the aspects and relationships of existence in that particular nation. The fact that in the church barriers are overcome, and men of all nations, classes, and races are united in Christ, is a sign that God's reconciliation of the world to himself has taken place.

The firstfruits are also the sign of God's grace, of the fact that the new creation is from first to last his work and that we have received it as a free gift. In the Old Testament, the firstfruits of grain and of the flock, as well as the first child, had such special significance for this reason. They had not only come from God but were a sign that all fruits proceeded from him. Thus the firstfruits must be given back to Him as a token of total indebtedness. So also, the church will offer itself as a living sacrifice on behalf of the *oikos* in which it is planted. The existence of the Christian community in any part of the world has a tremendous significance for this same reason. Whatever its weaknesses and limitations, the firstfruits are present, and they are a sign that God's incredible gift has come to that people. Thus this community of the firstfruits centers its life in worship and in praise. It is this which leads St. Paul to mention three times in the first chapter of Ephesians the centrality of this praise in the life of the church. "He destined us . . .

to be accepted as his sons through Jesus Christ, that the glory of his gracious gift, so graciously bestowed on us in his Beloved, might redound to his praise" (vs. 5). In this way, the life and worship of the church are central in its proclamation of the gospel to the world, for then it is no longer a closed community but the spontaneous expression of a witnessing community eager to "cause his glory to be praised" (Ephesians 1:12).

The Divine Pledge of the Full Harvest to Come. Among the Palestinian farmers in Old Testament times, the firstfruits were awaited with such eagerness because, when they came, they were a sign that there would be a harvest, and of the nature of that harvest. This is the significance of the church as the firstfruits in the world, the first installment and pledge of the new creation to come.

The hope which it represents must be understood in relation to *time*. The church lives between the times. The Christ who came will also come again. His return will be the moment of the final harvest when "the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God" (Romans 8:21). In between, he who has already given the firstfruits continues to work. New fruits appear; partial harvests are reaped, and all sowing and gathering is related to the end toward which all moves. The church which exists now in a particular *oikos* may be very small and weak. Yet in that nation it is a sign of the harvest which God has already prepared among that people and is certain to reap, as the fullness of Christ overflows into it. The church's penetration into other *oikoi* and nations may be very limited and its work of reconciliation of classes, races, and nations may not have gone very far. Yet the firstfruits of God's purpose are present — his purpose "to be put into effect when the time was ripe: namely, that the universe, all in heaven and on earth, might be brought into a unity in Christ" (Ephesians 1:10).

All this has tremendous consequences for the life of the church in the world. Mission must be the very center of its life, for the church cannot understand itself as the firstfruits of this harvest without being impelled to go out to its own nation and to the ends of the world as the instrument of that harvest. Moreover, the church must live expectantly in any nation and in any situation. If the firstfruits have appeared in that nation, it confirms the fact that God is at work there. As those who have seen and tasted the firstfruits can hardly wait until the full harvest has come, so the church. Because of this hope the church can accept all the limitations imposed upon it, all the problems it faces. It can follow the way of suffering and persecution not only because it has no doubt about the final triumph of God's grace but also because it knows that it is only on the path of suffering that the church can proceed toward the harvest. With this expectation of the harvest the church is free to live in and for the world, free from fear and insecurity, free from human standards of failure and success, free from unnecessary self-consciousness, free to go forward in faithfulness and hope.

A Distinctive Quality of Life. The certainty of the harvest directs our attention not only to the *time* in which the church lives but also to the *place* where it lives — the nation or *oikos* in which the firstfruits have appeared. As such they are a sign of the harvest to come as the total life of that *oikos* is transformed by Christ. This new creation is not another creation from nothing as at the beginning. It is, rather, the liberation from bondage of the estranged creation, the restoration of authentic existence to the created order which has been corrupted, and thus the restoration of authentic human relationships in community.

When God created man he put him in a garden in the world — in a particular *oikos*. This is the basic structure in which his existence was set, which was corrupted, and in which human life is now being renewed.

The redemption of man cannot be fulfilled except as it occurs in these structures, as they are filled with the fullness of Christ. What God has joined together, no man shall separate. This applies to man in Christ both in his togetherness with others and in his existence in the world. The church is the firstfruits of the Spirit in each nation as the sign and pledge of the harvest which is to come within the life of that nation.

The church as the firstfruits is called to be the agent of the purifying, filling, and unifying ministry to each nation so that what has been accomplished in Him may permeate into all areas of its life, intensively and extensively. This nature and calling determines the style of life of this community. “Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ” (Philippians 1:27 R.S.V.). It must bear the unmistakable flavor of Him who has begotten it, those qualities of character which can never have their source in human nature but only in the nature of God. “The harvest of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, fidelity, gentleness, and self-control” (Galatians 5:22). This is the flavor which must be tasted within the *oikos* where the firstfruits has come into being.

A double danger confronts this community: on the one hand, conformity to the world; and on the other, withdrawal from the world. It must remember that it is *in* the world, but not *of* the world. Neither aspect may be denied.

It must have a bearing which is distinctively “foreign,” recognizably the firstfruits of a new creation, showing forth in its life, Christ the firstfruits. When the church forgets this hidden life in Christ, it conforms to the world and is assimilated by it. It must live in the victory which overcomes the world, even our faith.

As the messianic community it cannot possibly remain aloof from the world. It is the community of the incarnate Lord and must be fully involved in all of the life of men in their *oikoi*. It may not forget that it is but the “first installment” and that the harvest to come will appear from within the same *oikoi* where the firstfruits are found — not of themselves, but of God’s grace, and in the fullness of time. Christ died for all and in a profound sense this community lives in a world already redeemed by him. If in its forgetfulness, which is unfaithfulness, it withdraws into

itself and becomes a ghetto aloof from its *oikos*, it denies the incarnation and the cross.

Election for Service. We are the firstfruits of God's new creation in a particular nation. Here we must come to grips with the mystery of election. How does it happen that the small Christian community in each land has become these firstfruits for the whole nation? They have not chosen this role; they have done nothing to achieve this position. But God has chosen to work this way, and he has brought this people together. If we are grounded in this mystery of God's purpose, we see and receive it in the recognition that this election is for mission. We have been chosen as the firstfruits in order to participate in the full harvest and share in his life for the world.

Here we see the significance of the sacraments. Through baptism we are united with Christ and set apart to participate in his ministry in the world. Through the Lord's Supper we are cleansed and renewed in this new life. The secret of triumph for the community of the firstfruits, living "between the times," is the constant union with the Victor Jesus Christ in his dying and rising again.

A Missionary Community. The church is the firstfruits of the new creation as it comes into being within a particular *oikos* of the world. It is, therefore, the firstfruits of the fulfillment of human life in relationship with other people within the concrete social reality in which they live. As such the new man in Christ is not an isolated individual but the Christian *koinonia*, a community whose life has been filled by Christ in a particular situation. It is God's household within the *oikos*.

Being thus the image of Christ in a particular *oikos*, the Christian community witnesses to what God is doing there and the possibilities which he offers for the renewal of human life. This missionary dimension of the whole life of the church also becomes a missionary intention which leads this same community to go out in witness and service to the nation of which it is a part. This is the mysterious transformation which takes place as the new humanity in Christ takes form in the church. *The Apostle* transforms us into apostles. *The Servant Lord* lives in a servant people. The more we receive of the riches of Christ, the more we are called to share them with the world. As we participate in the new age, we realize that it has dawned for all. As we live in Christ, we realize that he has gone before us into the world, that his Spirit is at work there, and that we are called to join him where he is. Thus this Christian community, as the firstfruits, lives to proclaim, by word and deed, the harvest that is prepared for the nation. As a result of the modern missionary movement, the Christian church has now come into existence in almost all nations and groups of men around the world. Thus for the first time in human history the firstfruits of the new creation begin to appear in all the orders of man's existence and provide the base for the Christian mission into each nation, both in depth and extension.

The church is also the firstfruits of God's reconciliation of the whole world. In its life, the new unit which is in Christ becomes a reality.

Men and women of all nations, classes, and races begin to experience their oneness in Christ. In the midst of all the conflicts of our time, forces of reconciliation are released in the church which overcome differences, bring peace in the midst of conflict, and establish a new relationship between peoples. At the same moment that the church has come into existence in almost all the nations, the Ecumenical Movement has arisen as an expression of the rediscovery, by the church, of its own essential unity, and of the urgency that this unity be made real in the total life of the church universal.

To the extent that these firstfruits express themselves in the life of the church, they are a witness, before a divided world, of the unity which God wills for the world and of the reconciliation which has been made available in the world through Jesus Christ. The participation in this reality also involves the church in mission to the ends of the world, for all nations must be brought in. The New Creation is universal in its extent; the objective of God's work of reconciliation is to unite all things in heaven and on earth in Christ.

III. The Present Moment in Redemptive History

The Lord of History

God's "Yes" over the world has affected the whole course of human history. This "Yes" is not a mere word or promise. It is the Word of the Triune God who has acted within history. God's purpose for creation was achieved in Jesus Christ. It will reach fulfillment in the final consummation. In between these two events, God's word has gone forth into the world and shall not return empty. The Kingdom has come and is penetrating into the world through the Holy Spirit. God's mission is going forward.

This means that man's history is not his own. It is God's history, history which has been caught up in God's creating, reconciling, and redeeming work. Man wanted and still wants to have his own history, to build a great new world for himself in time and space. The end result of all such attempts is portrayed for us in the tower of Babel, symbol of the disruption, contradictions, and meaninglessness which eventually manifest themselves in all man's strivings to build a new world, and frustrate his noblest ambitions into confusion.

Because God has intervened in history in Jesus Christ, this whole historical process has been reversed. The ambiguities of life and history are still present. All of man's attempts to build a new order by himself are still threatened by his selfishness and pride. But the Prince of this world has been routed. Jesus Christ is the victorious Lord, whose rule over history is real, though hidden. "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" (John 16:33 R.S.V.). The struggle goes on but the final issue has been decided. The old order is passing away; in principle, it has already gone. The new order is coming; in fact, it is already here. The

time is fulfilled: the Kingdom of God is at hand, indeed, has come upon you. Repent, and believe the Good News (See Mark 1:14).

Seen in this light, every moment of history is a moment of opportunity. Men can now appropriate for themselves — in all areas of individual and collective life — this new existence which is theirs in Jesus Christ. Because Jesus Christ is Lord, his “triumphant procession” goes forward within history. The incredible Good News is preached and received. The firstfruits of the new creation appear. A Christian community comes into existence all over the world through which God proclaims this new possibility and makes it real in the lives of his people. Thus, through the church, God’s “Yes” is heard and takes form in human life as it goes from one *oikos* to another, from generation to generation, until, in the fullness of time, the fullness of God may fill all in all, and bring all into unity in Jesus Christ.

It is in this center and hope that the church goes about its mission in the world, in the midst of all sorts of problems and threats. It knows that the Kingdom is growing and spreading, whether this growth is evident or hidden; that its labor in the Lord is not in vain, though results may not be visible. It was at the moment of His death on the cross that Christ declared: All is accomplished. Thus, we can face any situation, rejoicing in all manifestations of Christ’s victory in our midst, facing failure and difficulties calmly and confidently, and knowing that he uses our weak and limited efforts for his purposes. This is “the victory that defeats the world . . . our faith” (I John 5:4).

This dynamic activity of the Triune God, moving toward his goal for human life and history, becomes the central reality in the history of the world, each nation, and of each generation. God’s presence and power, manifest in every moment of history, and man’s constant attempt at self-aggrandizement, creates a dynamic situation.

Thus, men are confronted with the choice between life and death in a very specific way, at every point in their individual and collective existence. The issues which demand their decision are those which Jesus Christ raises and their response determines their destiny in a world in which he is Lord.

Discerning the Signs of the Times

From this point of view we hear afresh his command to “watch” and to “be wise.”

He urges us to discern the signs of the times. This does not mean that we are expected to decipher the hidden development of history or predict the course of events in the modern world. It does mean, however, that to the degree that we look at the world through the “eyes of faith” and allow the Holy Spirit to guide us, we will be able to discern to some degree the nature of the choice which Jesus Christ puts before us today and the issues which are being raised for humanity in a world in which God is at work. Faithful discernment means keeping up with Jesus Christ.

Discerning the signs of the times also means striving to understand what the church is called to be and do in any particular moment. If the struggle between the new order and the old is constantly going on in the world, then the new life which Jesus Christ offers to man must take form in the midst of this struggle. It is the task of the church to make this new life visible. It is called to discern where the real frontiers of this struggle are at any moment, and discover how it can be free to be involved there. When this happens, the church participates joyfully in God's work; when it fails at this point, it falls victim to fear and frustration. As the church is tempted to settle down and find security, rather than live as a pilgrim people, this call to discernment is always important. It is especially so when the forms of the church's life are so much out of line with God's work in the world that it can be a faithful servant only by undergoing radical change and renewal.

When we attempt to see our present situation from this perspective, one fact stands out: we find ourselves in a *dynamic society*, in which rapid change goes on at an unprecedented pace in almost all areas of life. Man finds himself in a situation in which he must make a fast-moving succession of decisions, momentous in their depth and dimension.

This is evident in the life of man within the particular social and political, cultural, and racial groups. Traditional *oikoi* in which men lived for centuries are now shaken up. Old structures are breaking down and new ones are taking their place. In this new world, all traditional ways of understanding reality are called into question; traditional patterns of life and all moral codes are losing their power over man. The issue that is thus raised for modern man in a unique way is the choice between *a new fullness of authentic human life in community or total disintegration*.

Events in almost all spheres of life contribute to heighten this possibility and this danger. Intellectual revolution brings a new freedom to know the truth and the possibility of greater confusion. The collapse of old mores makes it possible for man to find new structures for life and relationships, or to be completely lost. The rise of new nations has opened the way for whole peoples to discover a new depth and richness in life or be victims of the forces of disintegration. Social revolution is breaking the power of old social structures which held men victims of oppression and injustice and kept entire classes of people in a sub-human existence. They can now find new possibilities of freedom and material improvement, or fall victims of new forms of slavery. The breakdown of the old and traditional communities of the past has opened the way for a new structure of human relationships in freedom and for complete isolation and chaos.

At this point where modern man must choose between life and death, the church proclaims the Good News that human life, with the amazing new freedom which it has, can now find a new form and meaning in Jesus Christ. It invites men to believe and thus enter into a

community in which the firstfruits of this authentic life are already real, and which provides a sign of what can happen in all human communities because Jesus Christ has come.

This same dynamic society confronts man with another choice. Suddenly the history of many peoples scattered across the face of the earth has become one single history in which the destiny of the whole determines the destiny of each unit. All peoples have before them the possibility of a new relationship with each other or of destructive tension and conflict.

This dilemma is sharpened as dissolution of previous political structures has opened before many peoples the possibility of independence or new forms of domination; as classes and groups in all nations have come to a new consciousness of their identity and power; as modern technology has brought all nations and systems, all cultures and religions of the whole world into intimate daily contact with each other for the first time in human history. Man must now discover that some classes cannot live while others die, that no privileged group can live for itself or ignore its solidarity with those who are less privileged.

In the very heart of this dilemma facing modern man, the church proclaims the Good News that we have all been made one in Christ, that in him all barriers between men and groups have been broken down, that forgiveness and reconciliation are the central realities of a world in which Jesus Christ is Lord. The church lives the firstfruits of this reconciliation and discovers something of the richness of this relationship within the Christian community; it invites men and women everywhere to receive this same reality of reconciliation and unity in the church; it goes out to the world as witness to the possibilities which God's reconciling work offers at every point where there is tension and conflict.

The way in which these issues are being raised in a world in which God is at work forces us to a re-evaluation of the drive of modern man toward secularism. This secular mentality, expressed in communism and other forms, is one of the most serious attempts of modern man to create a new humanity and a new unity, by his own efforts. It represents intense concern for the issues of human life as they have been raised by Jesus Christ in our time. As such, it must be seen as the judgment of God upon religions in general and Christianity in particular, for their failure to provide the dynamic and cohesion necessary for the development of human life within the *oikoi* in which men live, as well as their failure to serve as a more creative and more powerful unifying and reconciling force. In their autonomy, these movements also represent the demonic possibilities which arise when men attempt to take the destiny of the world into their own hands and work out their own salvation. It is in the encounter with these manifestations of modern secularism that the Christian church accepts God's judgment upon it and discovers the pathway to renewal. It is likewise in this encounter that

the church is called to make known the One in whom alone this intense concern can be satisfied.

The Choice Before Us

If the church is to be faithful in discerning the signs of the times, it must also strive to see what God's presence in all these events means for the life of the church. In a dynamic society of this type, it must once again discover what it means to be a pilgrim people, with structure and program sufficiently flexible to keep up with events and respond creatively. In the face of modern man's search for new and authentic forms of life, it must be free from stereotyped patterns, so that the firstfruits of the new humanity can take form, vitally and meaningfully, in the center of the human struggle today. As the modern world has raised, in an inescapable way, the question of community, the Christian church must be open to receive from the Holy Spirit the richness of relationships in the *koinonia*, the common life in the Body of Christ. And as modern man is confronted with the choice between peace and conflict in all areas of life, the church is called to make visible before the world the reconciling power of Christ in the world-wide Christian community.

God is leading the church today on the road of radical renewal for faithful participation in his redemptive work. Our disobedience can result only in our becoming irrelevant and marginal to the life of man today.

PART TWO

THE TASK NOW

Introduction

In this study we are concerned with the world mission of the church at the present time. The *mission* of the church is rooted and grounded in God's redemptive work in Christ. As such it is unchangeable. The church in every moment of its history is called to be the firstfruits of the new humanity and is sent to the "ends of the world." But *missions* as historical expressions of this vocation may be faithful or unfaithful, relevant or irrelevant, depending upon the nature of their response in the concrete historical and existential context. As a result of recent developments in the world and their significance in God's redemptive process, we are convinced that the missionary enterprise has come to the end of one era and the beginning of another.

Two major factors contribute to this:

a) *The new situation of the church in the world*

The Protestant missionary enterprise arose in the last century in western Europe and North America. Many people assumed that these areas were essentially Christian and that all men there were related to the church, even though some of them might have strayed from the fold. Missions meant going to the great non-Christian lands where the church did not yet exist, and also to untouched peoples in nominally Christian lands. Missionaries were sent to Asia, Africa, and Latin America, where they engaged in extensive preaching and in the development of educational, medical, and agricultural institutions.

Today the situation has radically changed. Every church finds itself in a missionary situation. It is now recognized that in most countries of the West the Christian community is a minority in a nominally Christian context. On the other hand, in Asia, Africa, and Latin America new churches have come into existence as a result of the work of missionaries. They are now there as the firstfruits of the gospel in each nation. With the emergence of new nations, these small churches now constitute the principal base from which missionary penetration in these lands must go forward. Thus, today, in every part of the world the church has now been established, and every church, in West or East, is in a missionary situation, living in and for the particular *oikos* in which it finds itself and going beyond it into the wider world.

b) *The change in relationships in mission between younger and older churches*

Their relationships were formerly one way. The missionary enterprise was centralized in North America and western Europe, and the decision about the use of missionary personnel and funds, as well as many deci-

sions about the life of the new churches, were made there. This is now giving way to a new type of relationship in which churches, younger and older, are called to participate together as full members of one Body in a common task. The problem before us is to discover the proper structure through which these changed relationships can be expressed. In the former era, relationships were maintained chiefly along denominational lines. As a result, the very small church which now exists in these lands is also a very divided one. These denominations represent the importation of a western European and North American pattern which often has very little significance in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, and which hinders greatly both the church's penetration into the particular *oikos* where it finds itself and its witness to the reconciling and unifying work of God which a broken and divided world so desperately needs. The problem raised here is how *ecumenical mission can now proceed through ecumenical relations.*

These two fundamental changes in the historical and existential context of the missionary enterprise determine the task which we have set before us. To the degree that we ignore these problems and attempt to continue our missionary work as before, we will be victims of insecurity, fear, and frustration. If we are free to discern the signs of the times and adjust the direction of our missionary efforts to the direction in which God is leading his church in this new era, we will be able to go about our work and face the uncertainties of the future with confidence and expectancy. As a Study Committee, we have attempted to define the nature of the task before us and to indicate the direction in which we believe our search for the way of missionary obedience will lead us in this time.

PART TWO – FIRST SECTION

THE TASK NOW FOR EACH CHURCH

Every Church a Missionary Community Firstfruits an Instrument of the New Humanity

When we speak of the church as a missionary community, we simply mean that the church is called to be what it already is in Jesus Christ. We discover that as believers in Christ we are related to each other in a living organism which also exists in and for the world in a specific point of time and space. As the firstfruits of God's new creation, the church is set in the world as salt, the function of which is to savour and preserve the world and its orders from destruction. It is the leaven which permeates the whole loaf and vitalizes it; it is the light which shines in the darkness around it, indicating the true way to all. This community may be a very small and insignificant minority in a hostile environment. But precisely in such conditions the church is nonetheless called to be a creative force which permeates and transforms because it is open to the world, free from concern for itself, free to go to men in their need and to give itself for them in service.

In the New Testament the church is conceived of in these terms and set off from all other human institutions because it is a *charismatic community*. It is not an institution controlled by the laws of this world, but a community which lives by the Holy Spirit moving in its midst, and giving it life, form, and power. In the amazing picture of the church which we have in the New Testament, every member has received some particular gifts (*charisma*) through which the power of the Holy Spirit is manifested (See I Corinthians 7:7; Ephesians 4:7; I Peter 4:10 in all of which the fact that every member has received such a gift is stressed). The same Spirit which provides these gifts orders the life of the church so that each gift is recognized and used, and all gifts are so coordinated as "to equip God's people for work in his service, to the building up of the body of Christ" (Ephesians 4:12). In this way the church becomes a community whose members grow in maturity as each contributes his part toward orienting, strengthening, adding to, and sustaining the whole. This maturity on the part of its members enables the church to make Christ visible before men and prepares it for going into the world in evangelism and service.

The problem that we face stems from the fact that the church as we know it is generally not like this. On the one hand it tends to be structured according to the institutions of the world and to quench the Spirit by imposed patterns of institutional life and authority. On the other hand, as our branches of the church have developed in western Europe and North America, there has grown up a very different concept of congregational life and of the church's relationship to the world, which was then exported to Asia, Africa, and Latin America and tended to dominate in the life of the younger churches. We have thus come to

the point where the development of the church as a missionary community in the world becomes a question of repentance and radical renewal of the structures of the church's life, so that the church can be more open to the Holy Spirit and thus have a greater freedom to become what it is, a charismatic community.

We shall here consider fundamental changes which we believe necessary in the *structure* of the church. It is necessary to keep in mind, however, that parallel to these changes, the other essential requisite for the transformation of the church into a missionary community is a renewal of its worship and sacramental life. Without renewal at this point, none of our efforts will be effective; at the same time, renewal of the worship of the church may depend, to a large degree, upon these changes in the pattern and direction of the church's life.

One of our fundamental problems in worship today is the fact that it is so far removed from the world in which we live. It is part of our *going* to church once a week rather than our *being* the church in the world every day. For the Apostle St. Paul, worship was quite different: "Therefore, my brothers, I implore you by God's mercy to offer your very selves to him: a living sacrifice, dedicated and fit for his acceptance, the worship offered by mind and heart. Adapt yourselves no longer to the pattern of this present world, but let your minds be remade and your whole nature thus transformed. Then you will be able to discern the will of God . . ." (Romans 12:1-2). Here worship is the presentation of our whole being, offered as a sacrifice to God. It is active participation in Him as we participate in his life and work in the world. When we discover what it means for the church to be incarnate in the world, and for its members to live constantly in and for the world, we must also discover what it means for our entire life in the world to be "worship offered by mind and heart." In this context we will find new meaning in the Lord's Supper as our living sacrifice in our daily life is confronted and supported by Christ's incomparable living sacrifice. And as we enter into this communion with Him in his blood, the worshipping community is transformed into a witnessing community, proclaiming the Lord's death until he comes (See I Corinthians 11:26).

I. *An Indigenous Church*

Freedom for creative relationship with the life and culture of the nation

Freedom to be the firstfruits of each nation

A. *The Need for an Indigenous Church*

We have seen that God's purpose for the world is that Jesus Christ should fill all the orders of particularity of men's social existence so that human life, in each person and each people, shall be reformed in the image of Christ. The life of each people is a total reality, a way of life in which culture and language, psychological and ethical make-up,

social, economic, and political structures are tied together in a certain inner cohesiveness. The new humanity becomes a reality as Jesus Christ comes into and transforms all aspects of this total life.

The church is the firstfruits of this new humanity for that people. This cannot happen if Christians and the church are isolated from society; it depends upon a creative relationship and participation in all aspects of national life, and a sharing in the longing and hopes of a people, as well as in their frustrations and despair. It means involvement in the life where it is being lived most intensively, and in its most creative cultural and intellectual struggles. The leaven must be in the meal, if it is to leaven the whole lump. The seed must be in the soil, if it is to grow and bear much fruit. In fact, our Lord states categorically, "Unless a grain of wheat falls *into the soil and dies*, it remains alone." Only as the church in a particular nation is free to enter into the life of the nation in this way, will it be free also to bear the fruits of the kingdom in that nation.

This is a difficult and dangerous mission for the church. Its identification with national life may simply mean conformity or syncretism. When this happens, the *seed also dies*, but in vain, for Christ's new life is no longer in it. We cannot escape the fact that all attempts at such identification expose us to this danger. It is, however, a danger which we must face, for the church cannot be faithful to its mission in any other way. The possibility of attaining this faithfulness does not lie in the church itself or in its members, but in the fact that it is a community of the Spirit and lives by the gospel which is always a scandal and foolishness for the world. If it lives these realities fully, then it is free to take its identification with a people and its culture seriously. It discovers that even when it tries to withdraw from the world it expresses a wrong identification of the church with the human situation, identification with forms of social and cultural life which are disappearing, identification with classes, groups, or ideas which are no longer central in the life of that culture and people. The church must thus be free to preserve the scandal of the gospel in such a way that the scandal caused by its witness is really that of Christ and not of its own outmoded ways, foreign forms, or irrelevant actions.

In the face of the limited effectiveness of much of our missionary outreach and the small numbers of conversions in many areas, the feeling is growing among many Christians who are studying the problem, that one of the major causes of our failure is the *ghetto mentality* that often arises in the church. This mentality leads Christians to separate themselves from those among whom they live and work, and from the culture and life of their nation. It has been easy for the Christian communities in Asia, Africa, and Latin America to have a greenhouse existence, in special soil separated from their own proper soil in the center of the life of their people. In the period of implantation this was almost inevitable. The gospel appeared in forms of worship and architecture, of morality and spiritual life, which had grown out of its life

in Europe and North America. What is unfortunate is that these same forms have been preserved in some cases for so long, and often absolutized rather than made indigenous. To the extent that this has happened, it constitutes a burden upon the church which greatly limits its missionary outreach at a time when peoples in these younger nations already tend to consider Christianity as a foreign religion. They are doubly sensitive to those elements which remind them of the political ties from which they have emerged. As these same people are searching for self-identity and for a new center around which to integrate their personal and common life, we see how urgent it is that the Body of Christ take a more indigenous form in each land in order that the life which he offers a people may be made visible before them.

The *ghetto mentality* is often typical of congregations composed almost exclusively of members of the same race, class, or social group. In some extreme cases they are composed of outcasts of other groups. In all these cases it is difficult for them to evangelize and receive into their fellowship members of other social groups.

The essentials of a Christian community must be established, allowing other aspects to be developed in a way appropriate for each environment. In Acts 2:42 we read one statement of essentials for a Christian community: "They met constantly to hear the apostles teach, and to share the common life, to break bread, and to pray."

The rapidity of change in our modern dynamic society gives greater importance to indigenization. In some eras, a church might discover how to relate itself to a particular situation by a gradual process of adjustment. Now the situation which it faces in evangelism changes so rapidly that the very effectiveness of its response to the situation of yesterday may become a hindrance to its adjustment to the situation of tomorrow. Today a constant effort is required on the part of each church to understand the milieu in which it finds itself, and to relate to it. With the rise of industrial-worker groups and other classes, a middle class church or one which functions effectively in the rural areas is faced with new problems. New forms of family life, the development of a dynamic industrial society, and the modern metropolis make the same demands upon us. The church must make a special effort to understand and address itself to the mental patterns and psychological attitudes which are developing through the impact of modern science and technology, political ideologies, and new intellectual and cultural currents. It must discover how to approach the heart as well as the mind of modern man.

It is especially important that the church recognize the tremendous difference that always exists, and especially in the present period of rapid change, between the older and younger generation. Instead of being afraid of the new mentality, the church should be challenged by it and attempt to meet it, for only as it succeeds in working effectively with the younger generation can it hope to keep up with events in a dynamic society.

B. Priorities for Attaining Indigenization

By the very nature of the problem, it is not possible to propose easy solutions to it. They must arise out of the development of the life of the church in a concrete situation. The important thing is that the church be aware of the task before it and be open to the Holy Spirit so that it may be implanted within the natural groupings accessible to it. In many areas the church is so estranged, that it will be necessary for it to help its members realize their situation, give them the theological and sociological basis which would permit greater growth in indigenization, and alert them to the dangers which always arise at this point. Speaking practically, several points deserve attention:

1. *The use and training of leadership.* It is essential that the new generation of leaders in the church be aware of this problem and be challenged to work at it. This requires that theological students be brought into existential contact with the major forces which are determining the intellectual, cultural, and political life of the country; that special attention be given to the theology of the relationship of the church with the world; and that seminary students not only study contemporary religions and ideologies, as well as political, social, economic, and cultural forces, but also discover how to relate the Christian faith to them. Attention should be given in the practical department of the seminary to the development of indigenous forms of church life and structure.

In each church there are Christians who are members of natural communities other than those into which that church is now bringing the light and life of Christ. It is essential that these Christians, especially those with gifts of leadership, be recognized, prepared, and sent to establish Christian communities in their respective natural communities.

2. *Worship.* Christian worship is the response to the Triune God on the part of a people within a definite social and cultural situation, a response given by their whole being to Jesus Christ. This demands that the whole structure of worship be related to the psychological make-up of a people and to the realities of their daily life in the world. Studies should be made, in each cultural area, of how traditional forms of art, religious expression, and collective life could be utilized in Christian worship with the necessary adaptation to make it possible to express through them adoration of the God of Jesus Christ. The days and times of worship, and other details, should be adjusted to the local context. In countries where, as a result of the process of secularization, religion means nothing for the majority of people, attempt should be made to discover ways by which God could be worshipped in language and forms which would express the realities of the gospel in a new way, without using certain traditional religious forms which do not reach to the secular mind.

3. *Indigenous style of life.* Too often the Christian pattern of life reflects that of the church in another continent or century. One of the

most pressing needs for the church, in its total ministry of nurture and witness, is to develop gradually a style of life which in response to the gospel expresses imitation of Christ in the time and place in which we find ourselves. We must search for a style of life which is distinctively Christian and at the same time truly indigenous.

4. *Indigenous forms of church life and structure.* Foreign forms of administration and organization tend to estrange the church from the people to whom it ministers and impose an unnecessary burden upon the church. The Holy Spirit gives to the church in each land, in each era, those forms of life and structure which are the most adequate instruments for its life and growth. It is imperative that we be open to the Spirit's leadings in this regard today.

5. *Evangelization of communities.* Many of the churches have directed this evangelistic effort to individuals apart from the communities in which they share. The church must rediscover that these communities, beginning with the family, have a place in God's design of redemption and that the gospel is addressed to men in all aspects of their life, especially in their participation in, and dependence upon, these communities. The mission of the church must be directed not only to persons but to corporate groups, including their leaders.

6. *Modern means of communication.* In a time when men's minds are so largely shaped by mass media of communication, the church cannot ignore these means of presenting its message in a form adapted to modern man. Particular attention should be given to such methods as visual aids, dance, theatre, films, radio, television, etc. These means may prove relevant for illiterates of primitive societies as well as for mass society. They also permit an approach to the whole of man and not only to his mind. Particular value might be found in radio stations in a totalitarian age when other forms of communication become impossible. In making use of these modern means of mass communication, the church should be aware of the danger of letting its message be distorted. In a time when these media are misused as psychological instruments of collective persuasion, the church must beware lest it fall into this hazard, and always call for personal faith in the gospel it proclaims.

7. *Indigenization and the missionary.* In those areas where the younger churches are still dependent, to any considerable extent, upon personnel and funds from their founding churches, special attention must be given to this question by national church leaders and by missionaries, for no church can be free to grow or to be the firstfruits of God's presence among a particular people as long as this situation continues. Permanent dependence upon outside funds for the support of the normal life of the church is an indication that patterns of church life have not become indigenous, and efforts should be made to discover how such a transformation can take place. It is not only imperative that national leadership develop as rapidly as possible, but also that the number of missionaries in any particular church be small enough, in

proportion to the national leadership, as not to influence unduly the forms and life of that church.

The urgency of indigenization in the present situation also demands that the missionary have a special sensitivity to this whole problem and allow it to orient his actions and his relationship with the national church. If the church is to be free to find adequate forms for its life in any country, the missionary should not be in a position of too much control or influence. His place is in the life of the church, working alongside laymen and ministers at a specific task, in such a way that his presence can be a stimulus and aid to the church as it strives to find its own direction.

When the missionary has discovered how to occupy this position in relation to the church, it is then that he may also find that he has a special vocation as regards the indigenization of the church. It is he who may be able, at this stage of the life of the church, to remind it of its undue dependence upon imported patterns of life, worship, and organization, and thus help it to be free for a more creative relationship to its own culture. The missionary's experience of crossing the boundary from one culture to another can equip him for this task, while his responsibility, as a representative of the missionary movement, which implanted these patterns of church life, should prepare him to go about it with great humility.

8. *Indigenization and Denominationalism.* Whatever the historic justification of denominationalism in European Christendom, it represents an irrelevant pattern for the younger churches which cannot be made indigenous, because it is not rooted in the gospel nor related to the soil in which these churches exist. The situation in which the church is called to take form in these lands is not that of Europe of the sixteenth century but of the modern world of nation and nations, of religious and political ideologies which offer bases for unity. We see in the church union movement among the younger churches a great sign of the renewal of the church, moving toward a missionary community in the context of the nation and nations. And we view world confessionalism with great apprehension and concern, lest it turn back the clock and so hinder the development of an authentic missionary community in each land.

In all our concern for indigenization our supreme task is to make the lordship of Christ inescapably real to each nation and to all peoples.

II. A Charismatic Community

Freedom to develop those structures of congregational life, ministry, and organization most adequate for a charismatic community

Since the church is an organism in which the Spirit is at work, its institutional structure is constantly changed and renewed. The church

is a people who, as they are led by their Lord, receive from him a new means of existence in and for the world. The structures of their common life are the forms by which this new existence finds expression in a concrete situation. In the Calvinistic tradition these structures are always subject to the Word and need constantly to be renewed.

A. *Renewal of the Congregational Life*

The point at which this life of the church is concentrated is the local congregation, where the firstfruits are manifested within the local *oikos*. This Christian community, a part of the congregation of the whole Body, the world-wide church, is set within the natural community of the world. By its program the church is present in the lives of people where they are in the world, making available to them in their daily living the resources of the gospel and strengthening them for dynamic witness in the world.

Where the congregational life of the churches today is in crisis, it is due to a large extent to two facts: First — Our pattern of congregational life is a product of the concept of Christendom which arose in the Middle Ages when the church existed in a society in which every one was at least nominally Christian. Thus the primary purpose of the congregation was to nurture and care for the faithful through a program of worship and sacrament, teaching and pastoral care, centering within the four walls of the church building. As this program has developed, it has tended to draw people out of the world for an increasing number of activities in the church rather than preparing them for mission in the world and going with them there. With the concentration of the ministries of the church in the hands of the trained clergyman, the life of the congregation tends to become static, and the layman a passive recipient. Second — The congregation was formerly the Christian community in the *center* of the natural communities in which men lived, and continues to be so today in some rural areas. But with the development of the large cities and our modern dynamic society, the Christian now finds himself in a number of precarious natural communities in which the congregational life of the church is almost completely absent.

The transformation of the local congregation into a missionary community thus demands a radical change in its structure and program which must begin by an effort to be present with people where they live their lives in these precarious natural communities. This has led to the development of the "house-church" in which a small number of family units living in close proximity are related to each other throughout the week as a real community. Here the means of grace are related to all aspects of their lives through fellowship in sacrament and devotional life, in training the children and in meeting daily problems, as well as in evangelism. In a similar way, efforts are being made to bring together students, industrial workers, and other professional groups as well as smaller teams of Christians engaged in a common task and to recognize this fellowship as central in the life of the congregation. In countries

where the Christians have been a very small minority, educational and medical institutions have provided this possibility for a small group of Christians, engaged in a common task in the world, to form a closely knit community which offered a positive support for a Christian witness. The day has come when this same type of relationship must develop with any group of two or three Christians in a common work situation, for only thus will they find the resources to live as Christians in a non-Christian world and be strengthened and oriented for effective evangelism and service. The discovery of adequate expressions for this relationship may be the most important single factor in the renewal of congregational life at this moment.

This does not do away with the larger congregational unit, but gives new meaning and purpose to its program. With its focus on these smaller communities in the world, the larger parish unit becomes the base for coordinating the development of these units and for bringing their members together, out of their isolation, into the wider fellowship of the Christian community which unites us in all the diverse classes and groups in which we live today. The total life of the parish will then revolve around these two foci and tasks: the growth of the small nuclei of Christians who live in close geographical contact or work together at some task in the world, and the uniting of those who are thus scattered in the world. In this way, the program of Christian education of the local church is centered, in the first place, in these smaller units where a more constant and intensive job can be done, and on the thorough training, in the parish, of all those who have special gifts for this teaching ministry. Likewise, the worship and sacramental life of the parish can break out of the present impasse and take on new vitality and meaning as it relates the resources of the gospel to the concrete situation in which men find themselves in the world.

B. The Recognition and Training of the Ministry in a Charismatic Community

The life and missionary outreach of the younger churches has been seriously compromised in many places by the acceptance of a pattern of ministry which grew out of a special historic situation in western Europe and North America, and which even there is now being submitted to critical re-examination. It has been generally assumed that the ministry of the church should be limited primarily to a special class of people who are employed full time to do most of the work of the church. This has placed an impossible burden upon the church in many areas of the world and left large numbers of congregations without adequate pastoral care. It has also tended to produce a static type of congregational life in which the layman often has little to do except as he helps the minister.

In recent years a great deal of study of the New Testament doctrine of the ministry and of the nature of the church and its relationship

to the modern world has led to a new understanding of the nature and place of the ministry in the church, which may open new possibilities for the re-thinking of this problem and the re-ordering of the church's life. If the younger churches are to become more dynamic missionary communities, this point needs serious attention, as is indicated by the way in which certain sectarian groups and indigenous movements in many parts of the world have taken over the missionary initiative from us. If we examine their work, it becomes evident that the one characteristic common to almost all of them is a different concept of the ministry, giving the layman a much greater participation in the life and mission of the church.

1. *Basis for a Redefinition of the ministry.* In the light of the studies which have been carried on in this field, we might suggest several points which must be central in this restructuring of the ministry in the church today:

a. In the church as a charismatic community, all members are ministers, each one of them having received a gift of the Spirit, to be used for the service of the church in the world. "Every one has the gift God has granted him, one this gift and another that" (I Corinthians 7:7). Some of these gifts, present in the community, are not officially recognized; others, by their very nature, require recognition. The Church is built up as Christ's Body in and for the world as it recognizes these manifold gifts which its members have received, prepares and sustains each in the exercise of his ministry, and so coordinates them all that "bonded and knit together by every constituent joint, the whole frame grows through the due activity of each part, and builds itself up in love" (Ephesians 4:16).

b. In the local congregation the most important thing is not so much the filling of certain positions already defined, as the recognition of the gifts which God has given to the community for its upbuilding at any particular moment. If the congregation has become institutionalized, then inevitably there are a rather larger number of offices which must be filled. But if it is a means by which smaller nuclei of Christians come into existence on the frontiers of the modern world and are related to each other in a living organism, then the situation is very different. The Holy Spirit, as he directs the church, gives to each community those particular gifts that are needed for its life and which come to expression in its members. The church will thus be able to live and grow to the degree that it is free to discern these gifts and give, to the men who have received them, the opportunity to use them and the training necessary to fulfill their calling. Thus the ministry of the church should arise naturally out of the life of the local congregation. It may be necessary, in certain circumstances, to bring in people from outside for a specialized ministry, yet fundamentally the basic gifts for the building up of the community should arise out of the work of the Spirit in its midst.

c. According to the New Testament there is a much wider variety of ministries than we have usually recognized. In addition to the many and diverse gifts which are manifest in each community, Paul refers to quite a variety of specialized ministries. He speaks of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, all of whom have been given these gifts "to equip God's people for work in his service, to the building up of the body of Christ" (Ephesians 4:12). Certainly one of the most serious errors in church history has been to reduce all ministries to that of the sole pastor, imagining that one person could unite in himself all of these gifts. This not only places a burden upon him which he is not prepared to bear, but also excludes from the ministry, especially in the local congregation, a number of people whom the Holy Spirit has raised up and gifted, but whose gifts are neither recognized nor used, except in some cases in a subordinate way.

d. The New Testament recognizes the importance of a special set-apart ministry. "Pastors and teachers" have been given their gift, or "due portion of Christ's bounty," that they might "equip God's people for work in his service, to the building up of the body of Christ" (Ephesians 4:7, 11-12). A certain degree of order within the Body in the exercise of gifts is necessary. "For the God who inspires them is not a God of disorder but of peace" (I Corinthians 14:33). The ministry of "pastors" contributes to the building up of the Body until it attains "nothing less than the full stature of Christ" (Ephesians 4:13). But as the Church is an organism in which Christ, through the Holy Spirit, lives, speaks, suffers, and takes form in the world, the ministry that serves this end does not follow a rigid, pre-conceived pattern. It is a question not so much of *order* as of *peace*, which means the effective harmonization of diverse gifts in one whole. Thus the New Testament Church has a set-apart ministry but no specific pattern for it. There is evident a diversity and fluidity which express the adaptation of the life of the church to specific situations and an openness on the part of the church to the leading of the Spirit in the creation of new ministries according to need.

2. *Application of the Redefinition.* If we apply all this to the redefinition of the place of the set-apart ministry in the church today, it would seem to indicate:

- a. That in each local church there are a certain number of members who have special gifts for the building up of the whole congregation and who should be set apart for this task;
- b. That the major task of these people is not to do the work of the church, to the exclusion of the rest of the members, but rather to transform the congregation into a dynamic charismatic community in which each member discovers and uses his particular gift for service in the church and in the world;
- c. That if the church recognizes the need of one special ministry

in each local congregation, or for a number of such congregations as the case may be, this minister's primary task is to aid the community to recognize the specific gifts of its members, to coordinate and harmonize the use of these gifts in the community, and to train those who have received them for the full development and exercise of these gifts;

d. That the number of people who should be set aside for a full-time, paid ministry will depend upon the needs and possibilities in the development of the church at any particular time and place. Where churches are very small and scattered, the emphasis should be upon a voluntary local ministry with a small number of full-time ministers directing and coordinating the work in an area. As congregations grow larger, there will be need for more full-time ministers, not to take the place of the other ministries, but to make their exercise more effective. In this way, the church can grow and develop as a missionary community in the world. Then the specialized, full-time ministry will arise as it is needed and can be supported by the developing church. This ministry will also have a new vision of its task, giving to it a new significance in relation to the church, and a new relevance in relation to the world.

C. *Theological Education*

This new concept of the ministry provides the context in which we must re-examine the program of leadership training and theological education in each church and region. If every Christian is a minister, appropriate theological education is the education of the whole church for its mission in the world, and our program of theological education in any church should start at this point, rather than concentrating exclusively on the training of a very small group in a more restricted and technical sense.

1. The base of this theological education of the whole church is naturally the local congregation as it is nourished through worship and preaching, teaching and pastoral care, and as it becomes a true community of shared responsibility in which the members are strengthened for their life and witness in the world. This must be carried out on the local level, but the church as a whole should give primary attention to this task and see that every effort is made to study the needs of the local community and provide the very best orientation and assistance possible for it in the carrying out of this task.

2. The focus of ministerial training as such should be on those special ministries which arise out of the natural life of each Christian community. All those in each congregation who have received special gifts of preaching or teaching, pastoral care, or administrative work, should receive the type of special and intensive training which will develop these gifts to the maximum. This will naturally be a program of in-service training, which should be worked out for these people according to the needs and opportunities of each region. National or

regional church authorities should provide competent teachers who might offer this training through special courses related to presently existing theological seminaries, or through itinerant teams of teachers who might develop courses on the local or regional level. This form of training is especially urgent in places where there are churches and congregations without full-time ministers, but should by no means be limited to such areas.

3. At this point the more traditional type of theological education which has been carried on in our seminaries finds its proper place. It will be closely related to the life and problems of the church and set up so as to serve the whole church as a center of study, writing, and teaching. If the proper attention is given on the local level to the recognition of the variety of ministries in the church, a considerable proportion of the students in the seminary should come out of this experience and out of the in-service training carried on for them. The seminary should arrange its program in such a way that it could include every year a certain number of people engaged in these specialized, volunteer ministries who are free to spend a year at such study. It should also encourage many laymen who feel the need of a year of more intensive training for their service in the church and in the world. In this way, the student who comes to the seminary from high school and college with a view to the professional ministry will find himself in a situation of closer and more vital contact with the life of the church and of the world, and be challenged to grow in his understanding of, and commitment to, his vocation.

4. In each major area of the world, but not in each country at the present time, there should be some sort of higher center for advanced theological study and research. This center would provide the opportunity for special work with pastors, for the training of teachers for theological seminaries, as well as for the exploration, on behalf of the whole church, of its new frontiers of service and mission. In such centers it would also be possible to bring small groups of ministers and laymen together for special study of particular problems and for the preparation of material which would help the church to come to grips with the issues presented within the cultural, religious, social, political, and economic life of each country. We are convinced that such centers can do this work only if they represent the united effort of various denominations in that region.

D. Organization and Administration

At present, in many churches the organizational and administrative structures which have developed have become an unbearable burden upon the church and thus a major obstacle to its indigenization and missionary outreach. In many cases, these are structures which have been imported from outside without adequate adaptation to a new situation; they have been allowed to become rigid rather than to develop with the

changing needs of the church and its mission in the world. In some instances, integration has meant that the church has taken the structure of the mission and thus has developed an administrative machinery which is top-heavy and tends to draw into administration too large a number of the best prepared leaders, leaving fewer and fewer pastors, evangelists, and teachers.

This situation calls for a radical re-examination of the role of organization and administration in the church and of the guiding lines which churches should follow in reconsidering and renewing their own structures. If we begin with the fact that the church is that community in which Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit, is taking form in the world, then we are free to study this problem in a new way and find new directions:

1. The organization of the church must grow out of the life of the Christian community and not be superimposed from outside. Its base is the life of the local congregation and the relationship between congregations as they form a larger unity.

2. The purpose of organization is to enable the church as an organism to live for its mission in the world and to manifest the unity of the Body of Christ both in the local community and in relation to all other parts of the church. The general patterns of church organization in western Europe and North America grew out of the concept of Christendom and focused on the inner life of a religious corporation rather than on the needs of men in the world. All our efforts at mission will be seriously handicapped unless we are free to find structures of church organization which are more adequate to express the missionary calling. In the biblical perspective, church polity is under the constant judgment of the Word of God and of his sovereignty over history. It should always, therefore, be in process of reformation and remain open and fluid to meet a changing world situation.

3. If church organization arises out of the life and needs of the church in a particular *oikos* as it responds to its Lord, there is no reason why it should ever take a form or size which makes it a heavy burden upon the resources of personnel or funds of the church. In biblical terms, the people of God is a pilgrim people. The church organization must travel light if it is to be faithful to its calling to be constantly on the move. Organization and administration always pose a serious temptation to a pilgrim people — to settle down, be comfortable and secure, if possible, achieve social status and prestige. A pilgrim people should live in tents. Cathedrals and imposing offices are not indispensable for its proper functioning. In fact, they may be a hindrance to it.

When the normal life of the church and the support of the ministry, or the general overall administration of a church, is dependent upon outside funds for its continuance, a situation exists which is artificial and which hinders inner vitality and growth. The life of the church in past periods of history, and the growth of Pentecostal and similar

groups today, indicate clearly that forms of church life adequate for any economic or social situation can be developed. Where this has not yet happened, the first sign of renewal is the courage to face this fact and do something about it.

4. Organization and administration are spiritual ministries given by God. They should not be monopolized by the clergy, for they belong to the whole people of God. Those entrusted with this responsibility carry it in the name of Christ and with the support and confidence of the Christian community which delegates this responsibility to them.

5. Church polity should not be a major obstacle to church unity. It should rather be an instrument for the achievement of greater unity in the Body of Christ.

III. An Evangelizing Church

Freedom from a Static and Self-Centered Existence For Maximum Evangelistic Outreach

The church's mission to the world is pursued both through *evangelism* and through *service*. Although in the past there has often been a sharp distinction between them, this is not legitimate. Each mission project includes elements of proclamation of the gospel and of its demonstration through service. All proclamation is of the love of God which expresses itself in Jesus Christ, the servant of man; all service points to Jesus Christ, and all Christian ministry to human need is carried on in the light of man's deepest need — of Christ.

It is essential, therefore, that we get away from this sharp distinction between these two ministries and see how in every missionary effort they are properly related. At the same time, it is important not to confuse them. When any activity of service is distorted to make it a mere tool of evangelism, it is not a legitimate expression of the love we have learned in Jesus Christ. No scale of values between preaching and service can be established, for Christ came both healing and preaching. Both of these ministries demonstrated his saving Lordship; both are essential parts of the church's ministry to the world. Moreover, a genuine piece of service by Christians with no ulterior motive can be an effective witness to Christ and an instrument of conversion. Recognizing the intimate relationship between these two expressions of the church's mission, we shall consider them separately to facilitate dealing with the issues we now face in each sphere.

Every church is under divine compulsion to speak to men everywhere the Good News of redemption from sin and death. In the paragraphs that follow we deal with those phases of the total subject of evangelism which seem to us to be of particular importance if the church's approach to this task is to be appropriate to the contemporary situation in which we live.

When a church is indigenous in a particular nation or culture, has developed a type of structure appropriate to the dynamic situation in

which it lives, is directed in mission toward the world, and is prepared to undertake those forms of witness which express the concern of the Christian community for men in the modern world — that church is equipped to be an effective instrument of the Holy Spirit in the proclamation of the gospel to its own people and to the ends of the world.

The evangelistic thrust of this church will express itself in the following forms:

1. Every Christian is an evangelist. If the church is a missionary community, it will accompany each member into the world, and provide him with the training and community support which he needs in order to discover how to present the gospel to men where they are and in relationship to the problems and concerns which are theirs. If the member's life in the world is a witness to the service of Jesus Christ to men, his concern for others will relate him to them in such a way that conversation about the gospel will enter naturally into daily contacts and relationships.

2. Evangelism will be the center of the life of the church as its witnessing members penetrate, both in depth and in extent, into the *oikos* in which it is set. The program of the church, in its worship, sacramental life, and Christian education, will be directed toward the world in evangelism. At all levels of its structure such as presbytery, synod, and assembly, the churches will show the same orientation. In all its councils the solution of administrative problems and the efficient functioning of the body will be seen as important only in the degree in which they contribute to the building up of the church for its witness in the world. The willingness and ability of a church to orient its life in this way is the crucial test of its faithfulness to its Lord.

3. Every church is called to go outside its own *oikos* to groups, classes, and communities which lie around and beyond it. Some churches do not now represent a cross section of the total life of the communities in which they exist, but are limited to a particular stratum of society from the standpoint of class, economic level, or means of livelihood. To a church of this nature, evangelism beyond its own *oikos* is a necessary task, however formidable it may be. For the accomplishment of such witness a church should be able to count on the aid of other members of the Body of Christ, both from the same national or cultural context and from other national and cultural areas. God's provision never falls short of the needs of the church, and within the total Body of Christ there will be found those charismatic gifts which will make possible the penetration of the gospel into every stratum of life among every people.

While every church must discover those *oikoi* to which it is called at any time, there are certain groups which today constitute a special challenge to the majority of our churches:

- a. Students. Throughout the world, education receives top priority.

The growth of universities, colleges, and schools is phenomenal, especially in new nations. This is where the future leadership of the world is trained and where the ideological struggles are most intense. The church must be present there. The most effective way to do so is to plant in this particular *oikos* a student Christian community. Whether operating within the walls of the university or not, these communities should be centered in each institution of education rather than in a particular denomination. Because of their ministry of evangelism, such communities should be open for free intellectual confrontation and spontaneous spiritual life. In this effort the role of student hostels and centers will usually be secondary. In fact, such institutions may even become an obstacle to evangelism by fostering a ghetto mentality among Christian students.

Without neglecting work in church-related institutions, the church must recognize that the most pressing task is in the large and growing secular institutions of education in which the very large majority of students are today.

b. Industrial workers. The continuing economic and technological revolution tends to increase the proportion of people who are engaged in industry and involve them in a new style of life. The industrial worker, his family, and his milieu constitute the most unevangelized field in the world today. Meeting this challenge requires sociological study of this new field, the training of Christian factory workers for participation in labor unions, the discovery and preparation of a nucleus of Christian workers capable of evangelizing the industrial world from within, and the development of new patterns of church life adapted to the industrial worker.

c. Business and professional men. These constitute in many of the younger nations an important group in a period of rapid economic development and educational expansion, and influence the lives of a large segment of the total population.

d. Government officials and political leaders. Proper conduct of viable government is vital to the welfare of people everywhere. Evangelization of those responsible in this area of life should be vigorously undertaken through personnel qualified and trained for this task.

e. Urban and rural peoples. The large city today demands new structures of church life and new forms of evangelism. It challenges us not only to meet the needs of its long-resident inhabitants, but also to give special attention to the population moving from rural to urban areas, as well as to immigrants from abroad.

The church should accept the challenge of the large rural areas which have been neglected, as well as the new rural communities which are developing. Also, the flow of population from the countryside not only affects the city but poses acute corollary problems for evangelism among rural people. The draining of potential strength from village churches into industrial centers with resultant net loss to the total strength of the total church, undermines the life of rural congregations

which in many countries have been, up to now, the source of greatest numerical growth and leadership development within the Christian community.

In addition to this, each church is caught up into the world-wide thrust of the gospel. This concern, which was formerly almost a monopoly of the European and North American churches, is now an imperative for all. God's redemptive work must go out to all peoples and bring all together in Jesus Christ. Each church has a share in this double mission. However small its direct participation may be in this world mission at present, it lives as a member of the world church and as a participant in its march to the ends of the world. This leads it to seize every opportunity to send missionaries to other lands; it also implies that it rejoice in the presence, in its midst, of representatives from other churches who are a sign of the unity in world mission and bearers of part of the fullness of the world church. This applies not merely to professional missionaries but to students, immigrants, and other Christians who come from abroad and whose presence must not be ignored.

4. While the life of every Christian should be essentially missionary in character and intention, within the church as a charismatic community the concentration of the missionary intention in certain persons will occur. The missionary represents one of the gifts which the Spirit manifests in every age and in ever new forms. He is one who is possessed of a divine passion to see the gospel penetrate into the lives of men to the ends of the world and to see all the world united in Christ. The missionary is one who thus feels the call constantly to go out from his own particular *oikos* to those beyond, and lives in holy discontent and restlessness because of this calling.

As the missionary goes with this intensity of concern, his life is a sign of the cosmic dimension of God's redemptive work and thus of the supra-national character and calling of the church. It is also a sign of the power of God to draw all men unto himself despite divisions and to the fact that the Christian is always a stranger in the world in which he lives.

The one indispensable characteristic of this *gift* is the concern of the missionary to go out from his own local group, class, or nation to those who are beyond. He may go from East or West, as a professional missionary supported by a church or in a wide variety of "lay" occupations. He may go to one particular place for life or for only a short period of time. In fact, in the era we are now entering, the non-professional missionary will probably occupy a place of increasing significance. In the younger churches, the most natural expressions of this calling will be through church members who go to special geographic frontiers and settle there, or who take as their burden the carrying of the gospel into the industrial or student world of today; through doctors, teachers, and agronomists who go to the interior of their country or to other places of special need; or through ministers and laymen who feel a special

call to go to the most distant frontiers of other nations. In the older churches, while there will continue to be an important place for recruitment of professional missionaries, the church must recognize this calling as it manifests itself among an increasing number of the most concerned young people who are anxious to go to new frontiers in new ways. The large number of Christian men and women who are going from one part of the world to another in all types of secular activities also provides a special opportunity for the expression of this missionary vocation.

The first task of the church is not to institutionalize and control this vocation, but rather to cooperate with the work of the Spirit in recognizing this gift, training those who receive it, helping them to go to the frontier to which they are called, and sustaining them in their exercise of it. This will naturally require a certain amount of organization and structure, but should be much more flexible than in the past and allow for a much wider variety of patterns of service and support.

In this day of increasing inter-church relations, it is not easy to differentiate between the "missionary" and the "fraternal worker" and to fix terminology that will accurately classify persons who respond to the missionary calling. Those who go from one church to serve in another represent a wide variety of gifts, and this variety is essential to the fullness of the church's life. The missionary represents one of these gifts which must occupy a central place because of the missionary character of our relationship with one another. To the extent that inter-church relations take place at the point of mission, and represent our involvement together in missionary outreach, this special vocation will be primary.

5. In the eras of the greatest missionary expansion in Christian history, the missionary vocation has been sustained by missionary communities in the mission field which have provided the type of fellowship essential for sustaining the missionary on new frontiers. An example of this in the recent past has been the community composed of missionaries from churches in Europe or North America, in which men and women, clergy and laymen, engaged in a common mission and shared a common life. One of the most urgent needs of the moment is for the development of new forms of missionary community life which are adequate to the new situation in the world mission of the church. These forms cannot be developed theoretically; they grow out of the experience of groups of missionaries who work together on a specific frontier. In the past these communities have been an example for the church of the nature of the Christian fellowship and have also stirred the whole church to take more seriously its missionary calling. We are confident that the Spirit is working in the church today in this same way.

IV. A Serving Church

Freedom from the Burden of Inherited Institutions
To Serve on the Strategic Frontiers

The richness of the heritage of the world mission of the church in service is known to all. At the same time, the need for radical change is urgent. Through a relatively large number of educational institutions and hospitals, as well as certain efforts in agriculture, the missionary movement of the last 150 years ministered to human need in an extraordinary way, provided the stimulus and example for the development of these activities in many countries, and was able to enter into contact with and influence a large number of men and women who provided much of the most creative leadership in their respective countries during several generations. Two factors have now entered, however, to change this picture.

(a) Service in the name of Jesus Christ is always the work of a Christian community which ministers to man's need through its daily life in the world. In the last century, this was the work of the European and North American mission as it established itself at a particular place in Asia, Africa, or Latin America. In each of these lands the basic Christian community it established is now a small, minority church. It is this church which is called to find the most natural and adequate forms at its disposal to minister to human need around it. These forms, will most likely be quite different from those which the church has inherited from the missions, and it is imperative that each church be free to find the way in which it can best fulfill this calling.

(b) All service of Jesus Christ who is at work redemptively in the historical process must be *relevant* to the situation in which God has placed us and in which he is acting. Christian service is not simply a question of ministering to any human need we might happen to meet. We are called to serve the neighbor God has given us. But the way we serve him must be determined by his needs as they are defined in the concrete historical moment in which God has put us. It must be the expression of Christian concern for men as they are, in relation to their problems and needs, hopes and fears, at that moment. We are called to stand alongside men in their need and serve in a way which points toward Jesus Christ and what he is doing.

The tremendous service which the missionaries rendered in the past was the result of God's use of this outpouring of human life *in these terms*. In an age when the most concerned men and women on three continents were eager to accept advancements in agriculture, medicine, and education which stemmed from Europe and North America, and to enter into contact with ideals of service, democracy, and freedom from the same sources, the missionary movement expressed its concern in a creative response to that desire. Now profound changes have taken place in the life and thought of these three continents. The Christian church should not be frustrated by these changes nor regret what has happened. It should rather be free to meet them with rejoicing, for the same or greater opportunities for service are open before us in this new situation. Moreover, the Christian community is now scattered throughout these nations for the first time in human

history. It, therefore, has before it a new era of service which was never possible before, if it has eyes to see what it is called to do and the courage to take the steps necessary to do it.

A. *Changing Factors*

The new elements which determine the character of the present situation are primarily two:

1. *The revolution of rising expectations among the masses around the world.* More than ever before, these people feel they have within their grasp the possibility of a better material life — of freedom from hunger, sickness, and oppression — and are inspired by this hope. At the same time, a growing number of concerned men and women of the upper and middle classes, especially of the younger generation, have been gripped by the miserable conditions in which the masses live and have resolved to do something about it. With this hope there is a growing recognition of the fact that the improvement of their lot demands radical changes in almost all structures of economic, social, and political life in each country. This awareness, together with the nature of the new technological society of large units, has made political action the decisive instrument and given it central place in the thought of those who share this concern. It is now evident that in our world much human suffering is related to political factors, and can often be relieved by political means. Ministry to need today means involvement in political action which can lead to changes in economic and political structures.

2. *The growth of a secular mentality and the development of the welfare state.* In the face of this, Christian institutions no longer occupy the position which they once had, nor are they free to develop their own programs independent of government control. At the same time, governments have available such extensive resources and have developed in many countries such a large number of institutions, that the service of the Christian institution is greatly reduced in proportion and scope. This is no longer the primary opportunity for offering Christian service. Now the great opportunity is in the participation of Christian laymen serving throughout the life of the nation.

B. *Priorities in Service*

Our call to Christian obedience in the present situation thus indicates certain priorities in the Church's service:

1. *Service in the political sphere.* In many parts of the world, the church has for a long time considered involvement in the political sphere as unimportant or inadvisable to Christians. In the present circumstances, when so many forms of evil and suffering have political causes and when new nations are emerging and face their political problems, it is indispensable for Christians to take an active part in

political life for the sake both of loving service to their community and of identification with the life of the nation.

Christian participation in politics includes:

- permanent efforts to keep informed of political events
- exercise of civic rights
- participation in labor unions and business and professional organizations
- participation in political parties.

In all this service the Christian should be guided not by ideological, nationalistic, or party concerns, but by the calling to give expression to his love for his neighbor. In this time of rapid social and economic change, such concern will involve, in many places, action to change certain structures of society in order to make possible a greater degree of well being and social justice for the underprivileged. This means that the Christian will often find himself on the side of the social revolution.

In fulfilling this political service the Christian must remember that he is also rendering witness to Jesus Christ before men. He should, therefore, beware lest he fall into selfishness and pride, either individual or ecclesiastical, thus denying his avowed intention of love. He should also be conscious, and make clear to all that while he tries through his service to witness to his faith in Jesus Christ, he is at the same time victim of his human frailty. The results of his action will at best be very imperfect signs of God's kingdom.

It is essential to make a clear distinction between this individual political action and the task of the church. While the individual must for the sake of effectiveness enter directly and fully in the political arena, associating himself with parties or groups and giving his support to constructive programs, the church can never identify itself as such with any political party or program however noble they be. On the contrary, it must protest each time the term "Christian" is applied to a party or program, thus attempting to identify it fully with God's will for the world and opening the way to crusades and persecutions. For the same reason it may be desirable that ministers employed by the church on a full-time basis should abstain from personal involvement in party politics. Perhaps they should also refrain from assuming responsibilities in public administration or at least ask for a leave of absence from the church before doing so.

It is urgent for the church to assume fully its responsibility of education and pastoral care in the political sphere. This responsibility can express itself through —

- a. General theological education about the meaning and urgency of political action.
- b. Providing a platform open to all points of view and convictions for a frank and peaceful confrontation about political questions, especially among Christians disagreeing as to the best methods and solutions to be adopted in a given situation.

c. When no secular agency or organization provides it, collecting and circulating information on political events and problems. In cases where the secular press proves scandalously dishonest or incompetent, Christians might take together the initiative of publishing a newspaper of political information and comment, watching that it should not be an instrument of identification of the church with a particular point of view.

d. A specialized ministry of pastoral (*and not political*) guidance to Christians professionally involved in political or public life.

The Church has a ministry toward society as a whole and especially toward public authority. It must remind them both of the will of God for his world and of the fact that authorities have been instituted for the common good. This ministry can be exercised in private as well as publicly. It will consist essentially in proclaiming again and again God's design as revealed in Jesus Christ and in admonishing authorities and peoples when their political actions prove to be incompatible with the gospel of Jesus Christ, e.g. in cases of racial discrimination, the possibility of wars or aggression, of persecution or limitation of religious freedom. In the exercise of this ministry, the church as such should not insist upon proposing solutions to political problems, this responsibility being left to individual Christians and groups of Christians.

In spite of these precautions it is likely that the church will be accused of mingling in politics; to abstain from assuming these responsibilities would also have political implications, specifically the support of the established order. In the last resort the church cannot avoid such risks, which are imposed upon it by the recognition that Jesus Christ is Lord of all the world and of the whole life of men.

2. *Service through Professional Life.* Christian laymen today are scattered throughout each country and involved in a wide variety of activities in business and industry, on farms and in factories, as teachers, doctors, and in other professions. It is primarily through their daily life in these areas of work that the church is present in the world and engaged in service to men. In the same way that formerly the missionary who went to these lands as doctor or teacher was the symbol and instrument of this service, today the Christian layman is called to make of his total life in the world this same sort of expression of the service of Jesus Christ.

This call to Christian service implies a total orientation of professional life, in which the layman chooses his work in the light of the gifts which God has given to him and the way they can best be used in service to his neighbor in the situation in which God has put him. It requires a profound sense of vocation which sees all aspects of professional life as related to the gospel and thus as offering an opportunity for witness and service. As it is service of Jesus Christ, the Servant Lord, it can be offered only if we are ready to accept the way of suffering and crucifixion.

This is a task which is as difficult and as demanding as the earlier vocation of the foreign missionary, and which can be fulfilled only if the church takes this responsibility with great seriousness. It demands an emphasis on the calling to service throughout the entire program of the church in such a way that the younger generation is confronted with this call and oriented toward it, at the same time that those who have come to see their profession in this light are prepared for it. It requires that the minister be in sufficiently close contact with the daily life of the layman in the world that he is aware of the tension in which he lives as a Christian, and the dilemmas which he faces when he attempts to make his life in the world a means of service for Jesus Christ. It requires, further, that the layman who has taken this service upon himself be a member of a closely-knit community with others who are engaged in the same sort of mission on the same frontier. Only thus can he be sustained and so surrounded with the resources of the gospel that this service can become a means of participation in the Good News of the gospel rather than an impossible burden.

If this is to happen throughout the church, new forms of church life must develop. In Europe and North America there has been a growing interest in Lay Institutes. These have provided centers for bringing together such professional groups, making it possible for them to study and pray together, and thus discover the meaning of their service to the world through professional life. Several such centers have been or are being established in the areas of the younger churches. We believe they should be encouraged and strengthened and further efforts along this line should be made. Beyond this, it is essential for the church to discover how people engaged in the same type of work in the world can be brought together regularly as a central part of the life of the church. In this sense Roman Catholicism, through the diverse forms of Catholic Action, has gone much farther than has Protestantism at this point and has discovered how to develop core groups of "militants" among students, workers, and others. Unless this work receives as important a place in the program of the churches today, we cannot expect to meet the opportunity of service to the world which God has set before us.

Moreover, the preparation for this service should begin early, especially with groups of students and young factory and office workers. Instead of limiting our thinking to traditional student hostels, we might engage in experiments in community life of small units of students going into the same profession such as teaching, engineering, business, medicine, or social work, and develop a group discipline and program of study through which the entire professional training of the student would be related to the Christian faith and to his mission in the world. This might contribute to the formation of nuclei of Christians who would go into these professions with a deep sense of Christian service.

We believe that the time has come when the church's service in education, medicine, and social service must be focused at this point. Whatever may be the decision of the church regarding those institutions

which it has inherited from the missions, the fact remains that today the major opportunity which the church has for service in these fields lies in the Christian laymen who as teachers and doctors are scattered throughout each country. To the degree that these teachers see their profession as an opportunity of Christian service and are so oriented that this takes place, the church will be prepared to serve in education in the world in which we are now living. In the same manner, the large number of Christian doctors at work in some countries in all sorts of situations offer the major opportunity which the church has of service in medicine.

The response to this challenge must come primarily from each national church, but the missionary who is interested in education or medicine also has a task to perform. The Commission can contribute to this goal by giving priority to this vocation in its selection of missionary candidates and in their training before going abroad. Attempts should also be made to encourage and help Christian doctors and teachers to go to certain parts of Asia, Africa, and Latin America where they would work at their profession in secular institutions and join with Christians in that land engaged in the same work in common dedication to this task of service. Especially in countries where a welfare state develops, Christian teachers, doctors, social workers, etc. should see in the social institutions of the welfare state a new and challenging opportunity for Christian witness and service. A similar opportunity is offered by all the national voluntary campaigns for literacy, and other channels of social rehabilitation. In no case should the secular character of these institutions and efforts directed toward the welfare of the people be held as an obstacle to Christian participation.

3. Service through Educational Institutions

a. General

We will be prepared to face courageously the agonizing dilemmas which we confront with our educational institutions today only if we are able to see them in the light of the changes which have come about in Asia, Africa, and Latin America in recent decades and of the new priorities of Christian service in the modern world which we have attempted to outline above. The question we face with these institutions is not simply whether they are doing a good job, but to what extent they make it possible for the church to do the right thing at the right time in its Christian obedience.

We are well aware of the tremendous contributions which these institutions made in the past and that many of them are still making. The missionary movement was characterized by its pioneering work in the field of education. Its services stemmed from its missionary zeal and were conceived of as instruments of evangelism. The work was carried out in countries dominated by foreign powers, often unaware

of and unable to assume such responsibilities. Under these circumstances the church enjoyed full freedom in shaping and directing its educational system. Through this service education penetrated into cultures, raised the rate of literacy, elevated the position of women, and permeated society with Christian concepts of human worth and freedom. By its continued efforts on all levels of education it contributed to the modern awakening of many nations and toward emancipation from social, economic, and political tyrannies. Christian institutions put a great premium on integrity, responsibility, and service, and required high standards of accomplishment, thus providing leadership of high calibre in many spheres of life, more especially in medicine, social work, and politics.

Perhaps it is to the credit of the missionary enterprise that in some countries of the world it has worked itself out of the job of education, as such. For we are now in an era when newly independent countries are giving education first place in their plan for national development and are raising educational standards as fast as possible. In this process, education is becoming secular and is controlled by the State to an ever increasing degree. Private educational institutions, Christian and non-Christian, are more and more restricted in their program and activities. They are also unable to compete financially with government institutions. Therefore, their service is becoming more restricted to the wealthier classes. The growth of anti-Western feeling in Asia and Africa further complicates the problem. In earlier decades these schools were the bearers of Western ideals which were eagerly wanted; now these same schools are often considered to be symbols of an era that is past.

From the point of view of the missionary outreach of the church, further problems have arisen:

(1) As these institutions have developed, they have tended to absorb more and more of the resources of personnel and funds of the mission boards. As a result, these institutions have so burdened many missionary organizations that they are no longer free to participate creatively in the life and development of the younger churches, to be involved with them on the newer missionary frontiers, or to engage with these churches in expressions of Christian service to the world which are more relevant to the present world situation. The transfer of these institutions to the younger churches, especially to the smaller and less developed ones, may have even more disastrous consequences at this point for them. The churches may become so overburdened with the responsibility for the direction, support, and administration of these institutions that they will not be able to concentrate their energies even on the most urgent tasks of building up the church, much less be free for evangelistic outreach and service in the world.

(2) In the past, churches and missions have often depended upon these institutions to do a good part of the job of Christian education for the church. This has been possible in some cases and has produced

results. Today, the governmental control of schools and their curricula, the small number of Christian students and teachers in many mission schools, and the small percentage of Christian young people who usually attend these schools combine to make it imperative for the church to develop the strongest possible program of Christian education without relying upon these institutions for it.

b. Strategy

What then shall be done by the Commission and the related churches so that these churches may be free to offer a more effective and creative witness in education rather than simply receive a burden passed on to them from the past which may in the end hinder this witness? No easy answer can be found to this question. Moreover, the situation varies from one country to another, and it is thus not possible to provide general principles that can be applied everywhere. We would, however, offer several suggestions which might be of assistance as the Commission studies this question with each of the related churches:

(1) As the major task of the church in education today, in most countries, lies in the participation of Christian teachers and students in the whole educational program of a nation, we would urge that each church study the possibility of using one or more of the educational institutions which now exist as a center for more serious study of its responsibility in education and for the preparation of Christian teachers for the exercise of this responsibility. This objective cannot be attained simply by having a conventional teacher-training school. It demands a creative effort in the study of educational methods and problems, and in bringing together teachers and future teachers for special preparation for their service to the world. Such institutions would need to be closely related to the church at the same time that they are free to enter into relationship with the cultural world. They would also require very well-trained and creative leadership.

(2) The tendency which is often common among missionaries and pastors to want to start new schools should be definitely discouraged through the study of the church's service in education today in seminaries and in training programs for new missionaries, and through a clear indication on the part of the Commission that funds and personnel will not be available for new ventures of this type except in very special circumstances. In some parts of the world, the church can and should still do a pioneering job in education. Before organizing new schools, however, it should study carefully the possibility of cooperating with other groups in an area toward this goal. If the main task of the church in education is to serve the nation, it will give a most relevant witness if it becomes a sort of catalytic agent bringing together groups who can take initiatives in starting new schools, without insisting on having control over such institutions. Where the church should take the initiative by itself, it should normally try to draw others into the sharing of this

responsibility and not consider that it has failed if such institutions soon become independent of the church.

(3) The major problem which remains, however, is what should be done with the large number of educational institutions which still exist under mission or church control. This demands careful study of the problem in each concrete situation. We are of the opinion that in some areas, where the government conceives that education is its exclusive responsibility and is rapidly expanding its program, it may be wise for the church to take the initiative in turning over some or all of its institutions to the government. In other instances, it may be possible to create boards composed of Christians and representatives of other groups and organizations who might cooperate in maintaining such schools as private institutions. In other cases, it may be wise and possible to preserve a more direct and complete control over these schools through boards of directors composed primarily of Christian laymen. We are of the opinion that where it is wise for Christians to maintain control of these schools, every effort should be made to free the councils of the church from this responsibility, which will tend to take time and resources which should be used for other tasks.

4. *Service Through Medicine.* The medical work begun by missions also faces today this same type of agonizing dilemma and should, we believe, meet it within the perspective analyzed above.

These institutions have been part of an extraordinary ministry to human suffering and continue to meet that same need. At the same time, most hospitals begun through missionary initiative face serious problems. In many places, state and other private medical institutions are better equipped to go about the large scale task of healing and meet the needs of increasing numbers of sick at low cost. Because of this fact the continuation of church hospitals which cannot compete with others in high standards and resources has become, in some regions, a burden to the church and a source of problems and frustrations. In some hospitals it has been difficult to get young Christian doctors to serve permanently on the staff. In almost all cases these hospitals will demand increasing amounts of money from outside sources.

To meet this new situation, the Commission and the related churches must re-examine carefully the present patterns of service through medicine. The guiding question in such reassessment of strategy is not "How can we serve the largest possible number of people?" nor, "How can we compete in medical standards with other institutions?" We must rather ask: "How can the church in any country best fulfill its healing ministry within the limitations of its resources?" "Does the existing medical work represent a genuine service outreach by the church into the life of its community at the point of health and healing?"

In this partnership with the community in its concern for human suffering and disease we believe that the most important single concern of the church should be the development and orientation of a mission-

ary vocation among Christian doctors. Where church-related hospitals exist and should continue, it is urgent that special attention be given to this task, and that ways be found to recruit doctors for this service and provide them with the encouragement and assistance they will need to become involved in such service in isolated and abandoned interior regions, among those who need medical assistance most desperately, and on the frontiers of medicine and medical service in a particular country. Medical missionaries should be encouraged to see the importance of this work and take initiatives in this field together with Christian doctors where they are.

We are convinced that church-controlled hospitals, except as they contribute to the task we have just referred to, will have a more and more limited place in the mission of the younger churches in the future. We recommend that the proportion of resources devoted to this purpose become the subject of serious study, and that, where hospitals are in a precarious situation, with their prospects for future use and development very restricted, the possibility of closing them be definitely considered.

Where hospitals exist which are doing good and much needed work, a study should be made of the possibility of finding ways by which they can be administered and operated by independent boards composed largely of Christians, and perhaps with resources from outside, in such a way that the service which they continue to render will not overburden the church nor distract its attention from its primary responsibility in this field.

We realize that what we have said above about the nature of the church's calling to evangelism and service in today's world may demand radical changes in program and policy, both on the part of the Commission and the related churches. The time has come when each younger church faces a tremendous new evangelistic task and is called to engage in missionary outreach on many frontiers around it. In the search for the most adequate ways to meet this challenge, each younger church must take the initiative, knowing that it does so within the solidarity of the wider Christian community. The United Presbyterian Church, through the Commission, is called to make this solidarity real as it engages with each church in this evangelistic outreach. We believe the Commission should be free in its program to give priority to cooperation in efforts of this type as they develop around the world.

The call to service is a call to the Christian community in each *oikos* to go out in service to people around it as a living witness of the Servant Lord. This call today is primarily a question of the involvement of Christians throughout the life of the nation — in the structures of social and political life as well as in their professions. The major task before each church is to discover how to be free from the burden of inherited institutions in order to be free for the building up of the Christian community for its involvement in service in the world today. In this

task, the Commission has a very great responsibility. It is called to engage in study with each related church in order to discover how its resources may be made available where most needed in these new expressions of service. The reduction demanded in the proportion of personnel and funds now dedicated to educational and medical institutions is the first indispensable stage by which the Commission and related churches will be free to develop new expressions of Christian service and evangelism on the more strategic frontiers of our time.

PART TWO – SECOND SECTION

THE TASK NOW FOR THE CHURCHES TOGETHER

The Demands of Ecumenical Mission Today

I. One Catholic Apostolic Church

A. The Current Ecumenical Movement

The recent period in the history of the church has been marked by what has been called the ecumenical reformation, an event of importance perhaps equal to the sixteenth century Reformation. This ecumenical reformation might be described as the rediscovery by Christians in different confessions and denominations of their essential oneness as members of the Body of Christ, the Church, and of the fundamental missionary character of this Church. This ecumenical reformation has historically been provoked or determined by four factors:

1. The importance of the great missionary movement of the nineteenth century in determining the present ecumenical reformation cannot be overestimated; many of those involved in the missionary outreach abroad in the last century soon became aware of the impossibility, both spiritual and practical, to carry on mission in division; not only does disunity provoke competition and, therefore, weakening of the forces of the church to preach the gospel, but division denies the message of reconciliation which is central in the Christian gospel and its proclamation. It is no accident that the first essential ecumenical event which involved the churches themselves was the great missionary conference of 1910 in Edinburgh, from which the International Missionary Council was born. It is natural that the lay ecumenical organizations (YMCA, YWCA, WSCF) were first missionary organizations concerned with the proclamation of the gospel to a particular section of society and with the recruitment of missionary personnel for the church.

2. One of the most obvious fruits of the missionary movement was the foundation of younger churches everywhere in the world outside traditionally "Christian lands." At the same time, social and political events, cultural revolution, and mental transformation led to such a radical de-Christianization of these traditionally "Christian lands" that one may speak today of the end of Christendom. As a result, it became evident that the mission of the church could no longer be conceived as the responsibility of some churches in some countries, but that all churches in all countries, being now in a comparable position in the midst of a substantially non-Christian society, were all equally challenged to missionary service. The base of mission is now everywhere. The task of mission has become one single task throughout the world and not a responsibility to any particular geographic area. This development also leads to a unification in the realm of mission.

3. Technical developments proceeding from modern science have at the same time led to social and international developments which make unity equally imperative. On the one hand modern society becomes or is in process of becoming a mass society in which the individual becomes anonymous; on the other hand, economically and politically, the contemporary world becomes interdependent; finally, the development of modern means of destruction make international unity both indispensable and impossible to achieve. In these conditions, reconciliation becomes the great thirst of mankind. Unless reconciliation is achieved, mankind feels promised to self-destruction and chaos and each man confronted with a meaningless life. To this anxious world, the church has not only to preach reconciliation, but also to demonstrate it. Unity in mission is imperative.

4. Finally, the deep biblical and theological renewal of the last decades leading Christians and churches everywhere to rediscover the essential content of the Christian revelation: namely, Jesus Christ, the Lord of the world and the Lord of the Church, the only Saviour of the whole world and the Head of the One Church responsible to announce this salvation to the whole world.

B. The Basis of Ecumenicity

All these factors contribute to make unity in mission imperative. But the last one only is normative. In Jesus Christ alone is it possible to find out what kind of unity the church must have in its mission; only by returning constantly to Jesus Christ can the church avoid false unities. For Jesus Christ is the basis and content of the church's unity just as he is the basis and content of its mission. Christian unity in mission is not something men have to achieve, but a reality which exists whatever they do or do not do. It is a given unity. It is Jesus Christ himself, Head of the One Church, just as he is the Good News, the content of the message we announce to the world.

Jesus Christ is the Lord of the whole Church and of the whole world; in him all things have been created and all things will be created anew, in him all men are called to salvation. Jesus Christ is the crucified and risen Lord who gave his life to save us all and to give us abundant life and who, because of that, was raised by God to the heights and received a name above all names (Philippians 2:9). Therefore, in its mission the church must have a unity presenting the same character. It should not be a unity only adapted to the situation of the world, a unity answering the needs of men, a unity concerned to achieve ecclesiastical influence or missionary effectiveness, a unity aiming at respecting the equality of different churches. The unity of the church must be in the imitation of Christ because Christ is the Head of the Church and because the mission of the church is to manifest Christ to the world. If the unity of the church is this Christlike unity, all other aspects and elements of unity will find their right place. The unity of the church will then

answer really human needs, perhaps not those needs of which men are immediately conscious, but their real needs, because Jesus Christ came to meet them. The unity of the church will make it truly effective and influential, not of the human effectiveness and influence, but of the real one which alone can bring men to faith, for the unity of the church has missionary power. In this sort of unity all "churches" will find their proper place not in some democratic system guaranteeing the rights of each, but in a common surrender to the Lord of the Church.

C. *Characteristics of Ecumenicity*

In that perspective, the mission of the church, and the church in its mission, will, among others, present the following two marks:

1. *Oneness.* "May they all be one: as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, so also may they be in us, that the world may believe that thou didst send me" (John 17:21). Jesus Christ wishes the church to be one because that unity will manifest to the world the nature of God himself in his fundamental unity. The unity of the church is condition and instrument of mission; it has missionary power. There is no place, therefore, in the church for division, for isolationism on the part of Christians or churches. So long as our witness is divided it is defective (I Corinthians 1:11-14). In spite of all our divisions we remain fundamentally one because Jesus Christ, who is the reality of all our churches, is one. But we may not refuse the gift of unity which reveals the oneness of Jesus Christ to the world. In our day we are forced to prefer a defective witness to no witness at all. If, however, we are satisfied in this defect and do not diligently seek to bring these destructive divisions to an end, we are unfaithful, and are refusing a possibility of effective missionary service.

2. *Catholicity.* All things have been created in Jesus Christ (John 1:2-3); all things are promised to redemption; and in Jesus Christ all men are called to faith and salvation (I Timothy 2:4). All things are embraced in Jesus Christ's love because in him there is the fullness of God himself (John 1:1; Ephesians 1:23). The world needs and can expect nothing but Jesus Christ and the whole world must and can expect him. In mission we are the ambassadors of this all-embracing Lord and love, and our unity must reflect that all-embracing character. Therefore, the self-centeredness and self-concern of our churches in their local, national, or denominational manifestation are scandalous; the Church of the Lord of all things cannot be self-contained; and its missionary obedience must not lead to self-righteousness; it must be missionary first of all because the world in which and for which this mission carries on is the world of Christ and that in Christ we are indestructibly linked with it.

D. *The Sacrifice in Ecumenicity*

Jesus Christ is Lord on the cross as well as in the resurrection. His divine glory is also weakness, foolishness, and scandal. If God chose

that his Son should fulfil his ministry through humiliation and death, the church must fulfil its own ministry in the image of its Lord assuming or being ready to accept the same weakness, foolishness, and scandal, the same humiliation and death (I Corinthians 1:26-28). Only thus can the church expect to walk toward success of its ministry and the effectiveness of its mission. The cross is on the way of the resurrection. Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies it remains alone, but if it dies it will bear much fruit (John 12:24). Mission in unity implies for the churches and the Christians to be ready to surrender what is most precious to them in their personal and collective life; self-sacrifice, rather than the striving after prestige and power, should be their way of life. Ultimately churches should be ready to surrender, in the greater unity of a united church and for the sake of their mission, even those riches which have been most valuable in their missionary work. The heritage which each church possesses is not something to be clung to selfishly, but rather a gift to be offered in the greater unity of the church for the sake of its mission.

E. Obstacles to Ecumenicity

At the present juncture of history the church has to face several obstacles to fulfil mission in unity:

1. The division of the churches along denominational, confessional, and national lines,
2. The domination of some churches over others,
3. Lack of openness to the world, even in our search for unity.

F. Progress in Ecumenicity

In the light of this understanding of the church around the world as one Body whose members are united in their life and mission to the world, a new era has opened in the relationships between churches in the world Christian community.

The implications of the unity of the church in its mission have to be worked out in a number of areas in the complete life of our churches. Such developments as the constitution of the World Council of Churches, the establishment of regional councils (EACC, AACC, and possible similar councils), of national and local councils of churches, the coming integration between the IMC and WCC, the achievement of church reunion in different parts of the world or the work toward it – all are encouraging beginnings. The change of name and structure from the Board of Foreign Missions to the Commission on Ecumenical Mission and Relations was an expression of this new era in church relationships and opened the way for pioneer work in exploring new possibilities.

We shall here consider first, what this implies in the changing relationships between the Commission and the related churches, and second, its wider ecumenical implications.

II. *Changing Relationships between mother and daughter churches*

The point of major concern of the Commission in its ecumenical mission is naturally with those churches which have grown out of its own missionary effort during the past one hundred years. All of these relationships of mother and daughter churches are now in a process of ferment which is due to at least three factors: (1) The end of the colonial era made more evident the extent to which the colonial mentality had penetrated into the attitudes and work of the missionaries and led to the development of certain structures of dependence upon the sending churches. The self-consciousness of new nations has created a new sensitivity to these problems and stressed the need for a truly indigenous church. (2) Theological and biblical studies have given us a renewed vision of what the church is and of the type of relationships which should exist between members of the Body of Christ. (3) As the younger churches develop in a dynamic society, the relationships between mother and daughter churches must inevitably go through a process of constant adjustment and change. In our modern world, the relationship between a parent and a child growing to adulthood may be a very painful process demanding constant changes in attitudes and ways of acting. When a church grows to maturity in its relationship with a parent church at this moment of history, it will demand this same sympathetic understanding and the renewal of all relationships. We are free to enter into this search not only because we have in Christ a norm for such relationships, but also because they are God's gifts to us. Christ gives to the church in a particular *oikos* its authentic selfhood as it becomes a community whose life is centered in him and related to the world in which God has put it. In Him we also discover the nature of our relationship to each other in one household. We are related to each other *only in and through Jesus Christ*. This means that we cannot get along without each other, and are so inseparably united that only in this relationship can we find our nature and destiny as a church. It also means that we are related to each other indirectly. Christ comes in between us. We cannot dominate or control each other; we cannot make our relationship too exclusive. Christ's love, forgiveness, and reconciling power permeate and determine all these relationships to the degree that they are centered in him.

In this sort of inescapable relationship which is being constantly renewed by Jesus Christ, we are free to face the problems and frustrations before us with honesty and courage. As missionaries and Commission, we are free to see the remnants of the colonial mentality in our midst and thus strive to break the hold of those attitudes and actions which may still reflect it. As members and leaders of the younger churches, we are also free to see the way in which the emotions and perspective arising out of nationalism can determine our attitudes at this point. These attitudes also are transformed as we live our relationship to each other in Jesus Christ.

The development of these new relationships will require much time and effort. They lead us to an agonizing search which is possible only because the Holy Spirit goes before us. The goal is clear: a new relationship in interdependence between churches which are constantly growing in maturity as the firstfruits of the new humanity in a particular *oikos*, and are discovering how to relate themselves creatively to each other in mission to the world. The major problem which we face at this time is also clear: it is impossible for this to happen until a church has achieved authentic selfhood. It is generally recognized that relationships between mother and daughter churches go through three stages: dependence, independence, and interdependence. These stages are interpenetrating in normal growth. Where authentic selfhood has not yet occurred, it must become the first step toward a mature relationship in which younger and older churches share together in their mission to the world.

This implies that the Commission and all of its missionaries must be especially sensitive to what is demanded of them at this point. It also means that the leaders of the younger churches involved in this process must determine how best to move toward this goal. Its achievement, and with it the cooperation of churches in mission in a relationship of maturity, require that certain changes take place in the relationship between the Commission and related churches.

A. The Unfinished Task of Integration

Out of the transition from missions to the development of the younger churches, in the colonial era, there arose almost inevitably a relationship of dependence of these churches upon the missionary organizations for funds and personnel. In some cases this implied a certain degree of control of the missionary organization over the church or over institutions and areas of work in a particular country.

It has been for some time clear that this type of relationship cannot continue. As we have seen above, it is not an adequate expression of the relationship which exists between members of the Body of Christ. The church must be free from excessive dependence so that it can develop proper structures for an authentic life. This necessity is heightened and made more urgent by the pressure of events in the world today. Any expression of dependence or outside domination makes the church appear as an alien body in its own country, and burdens it with psychological attitudes and patterns of life which get in the way of its response to the challenges of this revolutionary world. Any permanent dependence on personnel and funds from abroad further complicates the situation. Where a mission has carried on its work independently of the national church, these problems are doubly acute.

The Commission took bold steps to meet the challenge of this situation when it developed its plan of integration of mission and church and made every effort to carry it out as rapidly as possible. As we understand it, the objective of integration was twofold: (1) to make

all the members of the mission-church and all the work in which they were engaged an integral part of the church to which they had gone, and (2) out of this changed relationship to discover how the two churches could engage together in mission, each giving and receiving according to its needs and possibilities.

If certain problems have arisen in the process of integration, they have been due to a large extent to certain historical factors affecting all mission work. Such integration, which should have been a central objective of missionary work from the moment these younger churches came into existence, has not generally received proper attention. The mission has tended to have a dominant influence over the church or to go its own way in the development of its program and institutions. Thus the policy of integration really meant healing the wounds inflicted by the colonial era, the reintegration of that which could not be separated but had become so. In some instances, integration came very suddenly, without adequate preparation of mission and church for it. There was perhaps too much emphasis on the organizational side and not enough on the radical change of attitudes and relationships which it demanded.

Moreover, a problem arose in relation to the second objective which could not be foreseen at that time. As we have indicated above, two churches are free to engage in mission together only if the younger church has found itself within its own *oikos* and is sufficiently free of dependence upon the mother church to be able to stand on its own feet and respond to the challenges around it. Only out of the authentic selfhood is it possible for a church to enter into a mature relationship in mission with other churches. The greater the former dependence of the younger church upon the mission, the more serious this problem becomes and the more effort is required to find an adequate solution to it.

We believe that the original goals of integration should be pursued, but that the forms which integration takes organizationally should be re-examined, especially in the light of the urgent necessity that each church be free to attain selfhood in order to enter into an authentic relationship of interdependence. We would, therefore, make the following suggestions for study by the Commission and related churches:

1. In the early experiences of integration, the primary concern was to dissolve the mission organization and bring all its work under the direction of the national church. However, in the process of integration, primary attention ought to be given to the church's attainment of selfhood as the firstfruits in the land where it exists. This requires that the Commission and its representatives in each church be especially sensitive to this problem, and that they, together with the national church, face it honestly and courageously. The use of funds and missionary personnel should be examined in this light, which may also require a re-definition of the role of the missionary in the life of the younger churches.

2. In those areas where integration has not yet taken place, we urge that every effort be made to achieve this goal, attempting to find the most adequate form for each concrete situation. Recognizing that integration implies a total human relationship, mission and church should study it in these terms and discover how to integrate the missionary and his work into the life of the church in the best way. They should also study what interdependence in mission means in that particular country and suggest steps by which it might best develop. Where conditions in a country do not permit that integration be implemented organizationally at this time, the continued existence of the mission should not prevent mission and church from exploring together how best to achieve the objectives of integration as far as possible.

3. Where integration has meant the incorporation into the church of much of the structure of the mission, or where it has created a type of administration which is an excessive burden on the church, both financially and in the number of people whose services it requires, the church should study these problems carefully and try to discover how it can gradually free itself of this burden. We realize this is not an easy task. Commission and missionary must share responsibility for this situation and cooperate sympathetically in attempts to meet it. We are convinced that no church can achieve real selfhood or be free to be a creative missionary community as long as this situation continues.

4. The objective of integration cannot be achieved where the number of missionaries is so large, in proportion to the size of the church, that they cannot be easily absorbed into its councils without becoming a dominant influence in them.

We recognize that no solution can suit all circumstances. Attitudes of self-discipline both on the part of the missionaries and of the church are basic in the search for a creative relationship. It is urgent that methods for effecting non-domination by missionaries and the developing maturity in responsibility of the councils of the younger churches be discovered through careful study.

5. Evidence indicates that the most serious obstacle to the achievement of the goals of integration comes from the larger medical and educational institutions which have not been intimately related to the life and work of the church. The turning over of direct responsibility for these institutions to the church councils has often placed an excessive administrative burden upon the church and directed too much of its attention to responsibilities which, in the contemporary situation, must be marginal to its life and growth.

We would recommend that, in those areas where integration has not yet taken place, only those institutions which are essential to the life of the church, such as seminaries and lay training institutes, should come directly under ecclesiastical control.

Other church institutions which are important for the church's witness should be turned over to boards of directors or other similar bodies composed mostly of Christian laymen.

In the case of the larger institutions, their relation to the Commission and the churches requires special study. The autonomy of such institutions as well as their efficient functioning would make desirable a direct relationship between their boards of directors and the Commission. On the other hand, the requirements of strategic approach to mission within a particular area make necessary some sort of consultation between the Commission and the churches regarding all such institutions located there. Only thus can the Commission be properly informed of their place and importance within the total Christian witness in that area, and thus know to what extent it should provide funds and personnel for them.

In those countries where integration has already taken place, we recommend that church and Commission together study this question. Special attention should be given to the necessity that the church be free from any excessive burden at this point in order to concentrate on those things which are most central to its life and growth.

6. In recent years the service of Commission Representatives has been closely associated with the achievement of integration. Timely and constructive work has been performed by the Commission's Representative in many places as he has taken the steps necessary to make integration a reality and has worked with missionaries and the church in the development of the new relationships which have grown out of that step. As new relationships are established, however, there exists the danger that concentration in one person of much of the administrative responsibility formerly lodged within a mission body may militate against some of the most desirable objectives of integration. On the one hand, however much he may guard against it, the Commission Representative may influence unduly the life of the church as it endeavors to find the proper structures for its life in a particular *oikos*. On the other hand, his presence may stultify the missionary in seeking his own creative relationships for greater participation in the life of the church. We are of the opinion that the Commission, in consultation with the churches concerned, should re-examine the position and function of the Commission Representative. There may be situations in which the administrative ability and experience of the Commission Representative can be placed at the service of the church with great gain to all concerned.

It is our understanding that the setting up of the position of Commission Representative was historically associated with an attempt at decentralization of administrative responsibility. We heartily approve of the principle of decentralization and believe that experience gained through the service of Commission Representatives can be creatively used in applying this principle on a wider scale within a geographical or cultural area. Thus there may be developed helpful and effective liaison between the church that provides resources of personnel and funds for use within a particular area and an area consultative body that will be representative of the churches making use of those resources.

It may be necessary to have someone in the larger fields in a central administrative position. However, we are convinced that, from this point onward, the basic relationship of the Commission with any related church must go forward on a much more informal basis, through all the missionaries on the field, as they participate as servants scattered throughout the life of the church. The official relationships of one church with another will be more and more through the officials of each church. In the sharing of the common life and mission of the church, not only must the church be free from domination, but also the missionary, particularly in his early years of service, must be given the freedom to discover and exercise his *charisma* in relation to the new culture and situation. In fact, the receiving churches should assume responsibility, as rapidly as possible, for the orientation and pastoral care of the missionary and for his integration into the life of the church. Where it is necessary for someone to be designated to give attention to matters of missionary maintenance, etc., this can easily be done.

B. *Changing Emphases and Patterns in the Use of Funds*

Funds available for the mission of the church are offerings that have been made to the Lord for the strengthening of the witness to Jesus Christ in the world and for the extension of his kingdom. In this context, giving and receiving take place in the freedom which exists in the Body of Christ, uniting its parts in deeper devotion to him and to one another, and in service to the world in his name. It is also one of the means by which Christian love is expressed, by which we bear one another's burdens and thus witness to the love of Jesus Christ before the world. By the proper use of funds, weaker churches can be strengthened for their life and mission and the missionary outreach of the church constantly expanded.

Creative giving and receiving is one of the most meaningful and also one of the most difficult expressions of life in the Body of Christ. Through it we are permitted to discover what it means to live for each other in Christ, in a relationship of responsibility and solidarity. But, wrongly conceived, giving can be a means of creating tension between missionaries and church, and even within the church itself. By the wrong use of funds those who give may dominate and control others, while those who receive may feel humiliated and become resentful. Dependence upon funds from abroad may even become a major hindrance to the missionary growth of a church. Few things are more urgent in the mission of the church today than an honest confronting of these problems.

All that has been said thus far in this report would seem to indicate the primary purpose for which funds should be given by one church to another: They are to be used to strengthen that church for its mission to the world. A church may be said to have achieved selfhood when it has become a missionary community. No church is free to grow and

engage in mission until its structure has become relevant to its own *oikos* and environment, freeing it to progress rapidly toward self-support. Attainment of a pattern of life adapted to its environment normally implies that a church can care for its worship, its teaching and pastoral ministries, the basic training and support of its clergy, some form of outreach in evangelism and service, and a minimum of church administration. Where this has not happened, the church is estranged from its environment, and lives in a constant state of insecurity, fearing the day when outside resources might be cut off. What is worse, it is unable to expand and grow; in fact, growth would be a threat to its very life for it would demand larger grants from abroad and a change of the present structure. A church may receive and use creatively funds for strengthening its life at any of the points mentioned above for a limited time, but these contributions will have a positive value only if they occur in the context of church life so structured that these basic elements can be cared for by the church itself.

We, therefore, believe that in those places where the church is still dependent upon foreign funds for the support of its ministry, administration, and program, it should study carefully the possibility of structural changes which would reduce this dependency over a period of years. The decisions about the type of patterns necessary in church life must be made by the church itself. For this reason we would favor the use of block grants, but only as a temporary measure. By this means a church can receive a certain amount to be used in the development of its total program. Were this to become a permanent pattern in the use of funds, it would most likely be a means of continuing the situation of dependence of the church. Moreover, it will tend to destroy the partnership essential in giving and receiving, in which all should share in understanding and participating in specific tasks.

In this period of transition, however, a plan might be worked out between a church and the Commission for the giving of certain block grants, which would be made available on a decreasing scale over a few years. In this way, each church would be free to face and solve its problems of changing structures without interference from outside. It might be important, also, to study how best to make such grants for institutions formerly under missionary control, as part of a long-range plan for their development and transformation in line with what we have indicated above (see pp. 66-69). The one point at which a grant of this type might be convenient over a longer period of time would be in the support of special institutions such as seminaries, which are central in the development of the whole life of the church but which may require continued outside support.

As this basic problem is solved and the younger churches are thus freer for missionary involvement and expansion, we believe that the pattern which will permit the greatest possible financial cooperation in the world mission is that of *short-term projects*. Such projects can contribute to the strengthening and development of the church without

creating complex programs and structures which will depend permanently upon outside support. They will also make possible new ventures in mission which, as they develop, can become an integral part of the outreach of the church and be supported by it. In granting and using funds in this way, certain points seem to us to merit special attention:

1. The basic discussion and planning leading to requests for funds should take place within the national body. In those cases where the church is still struggling to achieve independence, the early stages of such study should probably be carried on without the presence of missionaries. Otherwise they may have too much influence over the decisions taken. At some stage in the process it is important that there be joint discussion and study with representatives of the Commission in that country so that giving and receiving may take place in a relationship of shared responsibility.

2. Every effort should be made to guarantee to each church a certain amount of money for a given number of years for such projects, so that the church may know in advance what it can count on. When a list of projects has been prepared and approved, after joint study and discussion, the church should be free to use, as it sees fit, the money guaranteed to it, sponsoring those projects on the approved list which seem most urgently needed. This freedom is indispensable if the church is to meet the problems which arise in a world of rapid change and respond to the most urgent challenges it faces in its mission; it also permits constant re-evaluation of the church's mission.

3. We are of the opinion that the Commission should not take the initiative in providing funds for emphases for which the church has not requested assistance, nor should it exert pressure upon the church by letting it be known that certain funds are earmarked for special types of work, such as: student work, industrial evangelism, audiovisual work, and will be made available if the church asks for them. If there are emphases which the Commission considers important for the life and mission of the younger churches, it can attempt to arouse interest in them by sponsoring study groups and conferences, and making a small amount of funds available for experiments which interested groups in the younger churches might want to carry on.

In a relationship of growing maturity between churches, there is also a growth in shared responsibility and in freedom. As the receiving church assumes more responsibility in determining what the frontiers are on which it must be engaged in mission, it will also be more willing to have representatives from other churches share in study and planning. As the Commission gives greater responsibility to the church to decide how to use funds which come from abroad, the Commission also is free to make certain decisions about how the money entrusted to it for the mission of the church can best be used around the world. This means that the Commission must preserve some responsibility to indi-

cate the type of projects which it can and cannot support, as well as the purposes for which money has been entrusted to it.

In some parts of the world, one Presbyterian Church has come into existence in an area in which various Presbyterian missions have been at work; in other countries, a united church has been formed, composed of churches and congregations related to different mission organizations. As each mission has a different policy in the use of funds and some have more resources than others, this creates all sorts of complicated problems which must be faced if the church there is to grow to maturity and be free for missionary outreach. Wherever patterns of ministry and church support have developed in one part of the church which depend more upon outside funds, steps should be taken toward a more general policy. If it is possible to transcend this "only child" mentality, missionary organizations related to one church may be able to agree on policies and program, and pool resources. At the same time the church can discover how best to use these combined resources for the growth and development of the larger Christian community.

C. Changing Patterns of Service of Ecumenical Personnel

We have seen that the church anywhere in the world is a missionary community called to carry the gospel to the ends of the world. This contact with the *oikoi* which lie beyond, formerly occurred almost exclusively through missionaries from Europe and North America who went to other lands. Today we are in a dynamic world in which all geographic areas are in close and constant contact with each other and in which large numbers of people move about from one *oikos* to another. This is a fact which can have tremendous importance for the life and the mission of the church. At the same time, an exchange of personnel between churches all over the world has begun, as men and women go from one church to serve another in a wide variety of activities. The Commission has had a pioneering role in this development and will probably be more and more involved in it in the years ahead.

We have found no term which can be used to describe all those who are sent from one church to another. The generalized use of the word "fraternal worker" means that the missionary connotation is lost and with it a most important and central concept and image. The word "missionary," used in this general way, is also inadequate. In many places it is a symbol of an era that is past. When it is applied to all who go from one church to another, the missionary vocation is so reduced that its value as an image is almost entirely lost.

Moreover, its general use tends to give a special significance to the crossing of the geographical frontier which is not legitimate. As generally used, both of these terms tend to exclude those who may go from one *oikos* to another with a missionary intention but who are not employed by a church or a mission.

The important question is not to find a correct name for these people

but rather to define more clearly their role and the patterns by which their service to the world church can be expressed. We believe that this is possible if we make a distinction between a *general vocation of service* to another church or peoples, and a more *specific missionary vocation*.

When anyone goes from one church to another, whether he be a professional church worker or not, the very fact of his going gives missionary significance to his presence there. It is not necessarily the expression of a specific missionary intention. All those who go from one church to another, whatever the work in which they engage, become the instruments by which a special gift of the Spirit is offered both to the church to which they go and to their own. They are a symbol of the foreignness of the gospel. This is heightened in our day when a wide diversity of political, social, cultural, and racial backgrounds come into contact with each other; when people in new nations, conscious of their selfhood, are more aware of the foreignness of those who come from outside. The presence of representatives of churches from other lands in any place is also a symbol of the unity of the church and a means by which this unity becomes more real, making visible the world-wide fellowship of which we are all a part. They witness to the fact that all people have now been brought together and that the world has been reconciled through Jesus Christ. They remind us that we are all one Body in Christ, that the church is called to break out of its parochial limitations and be open to receive the riches of God's work in other churches and among other peoples. When a creative relationship exists between such a person and a church, his presence becomes a stimulus to the whole community and a source of enrichment for it.

In addition to this general service to the world church through exchange of personnel there is a more specific missionary vocation which takes a variety of forms today. We have defined this missionary vocation (see pp. 48, 49) as a special *charisma* (Gift of the Holy Spirit) to the world church which expresses itself in a total commitment to carrying the gospel to other *oikoi* beyond one's own and bearing this concern for mission to another church. This passion becomes so central that it dominates completely the life of the missionary. It so permeates all that he does that whatever the specific task in which he is engaged, the missionary concern is central. His apostolate, as that of Paul, demands complete sacrifice so that Christ may be formed in others, a daily dying so that others may live. It may lead to the renunciation of family, culture, or nation for the sake of this mission. It is thus a visible challenge to each church to recognize the radical nature of its missionary calling, and to each Christian it is an indication of what Christian witness requires in this daily life in the world. Through the missionary's total identification with another church, it is a symbol of our inescapable involvement with each other in mission. It not only reminds us of the unity which we have in Christ, but also that his unity is in order that the world may believe that God sent Jesus Christ to the world (John 17).

We believe that it is of the utmost importance that we maintain this distinction between the general vocation in inter-church service and the specific missionary vocation, and understand the role of each and the way each may reach fuller expression in the world church today.

1. *The Specific Missionary Vocation Today*

a. *Its Expression in New Patterns of Missionary Service.* If the definition given above of this special missionary vocation is correct, no single factor is more important for the future of the Christian world mission than the development of adequate forms for the expression of this vocation in the life of every Christian church. If this is to happen, we are convinced that the time has come when priority must be given to the development of new patterns. In a church which is alive and growing, and discovering how to relate itself creatively to the world around it, the missionary intention will express itself in patterns which are constantly being renewed by the Holy Spirit so that they may be most effective expressions of this *charisma*. Thus no pattern of missionary service should be absolutized or be allowed to become too institutionalized. Only as it is free to develop will it be an adequate expression of the total commitment and total sacrifice which is demanded at any particular moment and place in the mission of the church.

The more traditional patterns which are still in use fulfilled this very function in a former time. They still are the instruments of much effective service and sacrifice on the part of many people. But they also reflect an era which is now past and are too inflexible to meet the needs of the present. It is more and more evident that they are failing to challenge many of the most dedicated and concerned young people in the churches of Europe and North America who are concerned about the world mission and might go abroad if rightly challenged. In the life of the younger churches, it is not easy for these patterns to permit the missionary to be a symbol of the precise nature of the missionary calling to the younger church and what it demands in that situation. As the outgrowth of a period in which the younger churches had not yet attained selfhood, they may easily contribute to the continuance of the type of relationships which existed in the past rather than serve as a means of development of more vital and creative relationships in the new situation in which we find ourselves.

It is not possible at this time to outline clearly the form which such new patterns must take. This will come only out of the life and experience of the churches in their mission. Several possibilities, however, may be worth study and experimentation at the present time:

(1) A large number of Christian laymen now go from one country to another for a longer or shorter period of service in their professions. Some of these people have a special missionary vocation which they should be helped to discover and express in the best way possible. There

are other men and women, in various professions, who should be encouraged to establish themselves in their professions in another land as missionaries of this type. It might be a university professor who accepts a position in a government university in Asia or Africa out of profound missionary concern, or a businessman who transfers all his interests to Latin America for the same reason. Such people may have a very special place in the world mission in our time. They can participate unofficially in the life of another church in a way which may be most effective. More than that, they may be able to join with other laymen in that church who have a similar sense of vocation and are anxious to discover more fully the dimensions of Christian witness in the world.

We realize, however, that these people place a very special demand upon us. If they are to fulfill this vocation, they must be helped to see its importance and to discover the ways and means of getting established in another country. They will need thorough training over a relatively long period of time. They not only must discover how to establish contact with church leaders and laymen where they go, but also participate in the type of Christian community life which can be as meaningful for them as the missionary community of an earlier time was for its members. We would recommend that the Commission continue the work it has begun along this line and discover how to develop it further.

(2) Experimentation is needed in new forms of missionary life which will make possible closer identification with those among whom the missionary works, including a standard of living as close as possible to that people. New ventures of this type should be a clear expression of the demand for total availability which Christ places upon us all and focus attention on those *oikoi* which constitute the most challenging frontiers in the Christian mission today. They should also make possible involvement of people from Europe and North America with representatives of the churches in Asia, Africa, and Latin America who have this same concern.

Such experiments should probably begin on a short term basis. We believe that the Frontier Internship plan offers possibilities at this point and should be encouraged. Other new ventures should be studied and experiments carried out in different places and in diverse ways. Such patterns might gradually include some who are committed to this type of service for a longer period of time. We would especially recommend that, when missionaries are sent to new areas of work of the Commission and to churches with which the Commission has not been related formerly, such new patterns should be followed as far as possible, although their application should not be limited only to those areas.

(3) Such new patterns of missionary service cannot grow exclusively out of the life and efforts of the churches of Europe and North America. In fact, the most exciting possibilities for their growth lies in the areas of the younger churches as small *missionary communities* come into existence when groups in any church respond to a specific missionary

challenge before them and discover what it demands of them. As such teams find patterns adequate for their situation, and go to new geographical areas or special frontiers in the student or industrial world, they will constitute the most natural and appropriate base for the involvement of representatives of the older churches who are searching for new patterns of missionary life. The development of such nuclei may be one of the most important factors in the church's response to its calling to world mission in the new era we are now entering.

It is also out of such missionary communities in the younger churches that there should come a good number of those who will go for a longer or shorter period of time to work with another church in Asia, Africa, or Latin America, or to the church in Europe or North America. If the concern for mission is to be central in this type of inter-church relationships, it is indispensable that those who go from one church to another in this way express the missionary intention as fully as possible. In this way also, patterns for such interchange of personnel might develop which would be much more adequate than the missionary patterns of the past. At a time when these traditional patterns are proving inadequate and when many western missionaries are seeking a way by which they can adopt a standard of living much closer to those to whom they go, it would be most unfortunate if the maintenance of these standards were strengthened by their increasing use in the exchange of personnel from other churches.

b. *Renewal of Present Patterns.* The search for new patterns of missionary service will involve a gradual process which cannot be forced. At the same time that this search goes on, the great majority of those engaged in inter-church work will continue within the present structures. Until now this has meant that the major emphasis has been placed upon one single pattern of missionary service around the world. We believe that the time has come when this is no longer possible. The present structures must now permit the development of a variety of patterns which will allow adjustment to the wide diversity of situations which the church confronts in its world mission, and also be adequate to the requirements of the exchange of ecumenical personnel that are engaged in a much wider diversity of activities. At the same time that this diversity is permitted, certain modifications might be introduced which would increase the effectiveness of the missionary in terms of the present situation. As a result of our contact with the churches, several points seem to us to be important:

(1) The importance which must be given to the attainment of self-hood as an indispensable step toward mature relationships in shared responsibility for mission, requires that there should not be a large concentration of missionaries at any one point in the life of a younger church at the present time. This may require in some places a wider dispersion of missionaries throughout the life of the church. Where the problem is acute it may be necessary to consider the possibility of transferring a certain number to other areas.

(2) The missionary should be involved primarily in a specific task in the life or mission of the church to which he goes. He may go as a pastor, evangelist, or seminary teacher with the purpose of complete identification with that church in its life and struggles and express his solidarity by staying for life. We believe that an increasing number of missionaries should be used in specific projects — usually of short duration — which will strengthen the church at some particular point or permit participation with it on some missionary frontier. In such projects, the initiative and primary responsibility should be that of the church, and the missionaries should constitute only a small minority. This priority will require, among other things, a significant reduction of the number of missionaries engaged in institutional work at the margin of the church's life; otherwise, the Commission will not be free to provide assistance where it is most needed at this time.

(3) The mobility demanded of the missionary today, the need for short-term involvement in specific projects in the life and mission of the church, and the rapidity of social change force us to raise the question of the convenience of the present policy of commissioning most missionaries for life service. It is a fact that, even at present, a rather large number of those so commissioned do not continue with the Commission for life. We believe that there is a very important place for some people who will go to a country for life to be thoroughly identified with the church there. But the number of people who have this gift is limited. A larger number might offer better service if appointed for a specific number of years with the understanding that they would go to a church to make the contribution which they are prepared to make, and then return. We have no definite recommendation to make on this matter, but would suggest that the Commission study the value of a plan whereby missionaries would be appointed for a period of perhaps ten to twelve years, with the understanding that this is the period of service which they would give to this particular ministry. At the end of that time, those who have a special gift for this work should be invited to serve for a longer period, perhaps for life.

(4) In the present situation, the missionary goes to be a servant of the church. He can no longer be a member of a closed foreign missionary community. If, however, he is to face the problems of adjustment in a new culture and discover how to relate himself creatively to the church there, he will need the support of a small community which can assume a pastoral responsibility for him at the same time that it shares in mission with him. This must be a community of the church to which he goes, and should represent a serious effort on the part of the receiving church to understand the problems of adjustment the missionary may have and to find the best way in which people from another culture can contribute to the life of that church.

At this point, a re-examination should be made of the practice of the new missionary spending the first year or two in a language school where he is often forced into a foreign community from the start. It

may be wise to experiment with a short period of language study in the United States before the missionary is sent out. When he arrives on the field, he would be able to live from the start in close contact with a group of people of that church who would assume a certain responsibility toward him, especially during the period in which he and his family are engaged in language study and discovering how to relate themselves to their new environment. We believe also that the receiving churches should discover how to carry on a program of orientation for the new missionary and also provide him with an opportunity for study of the life and culture of the country as well as of the situation of the church he has gone to serve.

(5) It is becoming increasingly evident that the present salary of the missionary tends to limit his effectiveness in some parts of the world, and to create a wrong idea, in the younger churches, of the role and position of the church leader in society. To the degree that this standard of living becomes a goal to be achieved by the younger church, it imposes an impossible burden upon the church and seriously hinders its mission. We have discovered that a good number of missionaries around the world are disturbed by this situation and are anxious to find a solution to the problem. We do not believe that any simple solution is possible, but we are convinced that steps should be taken to relate the field salary of the missionary as closely as possible to that of the national pastor. We urge the Commission to engage in study with the missionaries of possible steps to be taken in this direction. It is recognized that the missionary may need a certain amount of money in the United States for education of children and other obligations which he has there. Some way should be found by which these obligations could be met at the same time that the salary which he receives on the field is more in line with the remuneration received by his national colleagues.

The question of the use of equipment by the missionary also demands further study. By the use of jeeps, airplanes, and all sorts of audiovisual equipment, he may be able to do a more effective job in the immediate situation in which he finds himself. But if the significance of his presence as an evangelist depends to a great extent upon his being used to help the church to which he goes to be more involved in mission and to discover the patterns most adequate for its evangelistic outreach, he should be very careful at this point. The use of tools which cannot be acquired and used by the local Christian community may, in the long run, hinder rather than help that church in its development as a missionary community.

2. *Inter-Church Service*

We have stressed the importance of recognizing the difference between a specific missionary vocation and the more general forms of inter-church service which have a certain missionary dimension but in which the missionary intention is not the dominating factor. It is important to

recognize that these two types of vocation exist. It is impossible to draw a line between them or to try to distinguish between them in terms of the type of work done or to institutionalize them. The special missionary vocation will be manifest especially among those related to foreign missionary organizations and similar movements, but the fact that one is employed by such an organization does not necessarily imply that he has this particular gift. It also manifests itself in the younger churches and among many in the church in America who have no relationship with a missionary board. To recognize that there exists this difference in vocation does not mean to establish a hierarchy of value within the church. It is essentially a question of a gift of the Holy Spirit. In the Christian community it is the unity of all gifts in one body which makes possible a complete life for the church and a full witness to the gospel. In fact, this gift of a special missionary vocation gives greater meaning and value to the other gifts, for it should make it possible for all to understand better the meaning of their life in the Body of Christ.

We would thus conclude that greater attention should be given to the diverse expressions of this more general missionary vocation in opportunities for inter-church service and relationships between members of one church and others which present themselves today. Several expressions of this vocation might receive special attention:

a. *The large number of laymen who go from one part of the world to another.* We have called attention to the possibilities which lie before these people in terms of Christian witness and service. To do an effective work, they need to have special preparation for this vocation, and the church in the land to which they go must be aware of the importance of their presence, receive them, and provide them with an opportunity for service. In addition to this they will need the constant support which can come only from a vital Christian community. When we think of their vocation, our attention is usually drawn to the large number of people from Europe and America who go to the rest of the world in a wide variety of technical assistance and educational projects, in diplomatic service, and in business. Equally important is the presence of students and others from Asia, Africa, and Latin America in Europe and the United States. In both cases, there is present a potential for the life and mission of the church which should be taken more seriously by churches all around the world.

b. *Short-term service on the part of those with special training needed by another church.* As new possibilities open up for this exchange of personnel, we believe that special attention should be given to calling and using the services of those who have special training which is badly needed by another church and could be used most effectively over a short period of time. If this service is given to one of the younger churches by someone from Europe or America, it is important that it be usually for a limited period of time. In this way, a few people can be trained to continue this work, while the person from outside will not

stay long enough to impose his patterns of thought and church life.

If we are all members of one Body, those who serve in its ministry in any church should be free to accept such a call when it is presented. When someone is needed for a specific task in any country, the church should look for this person, wherever he may be, and present this call to him in the same way that a church which is looking for a pastor may go across the country or even abroad in its search.

This service can be rendered by many people from the older churches who have special training and experience, but should be by no means limited to them. Among the younger churches, there are people who have a special contribution to make to the world church. In some countries, there is a relatively large number of people with the type of preparation which is especially needed elsewhere. We are living in a time in which these gifts can and should be used where the greatest service can be rendered to the Kingdom. Every effort should be made to support these inter-church workers through the joint efforts of the sending and receiving churches. If the Commission is involved in such projects, its relationships should be indirect. The less dependent any project of this type is upon support from the Commission, the more relevant its service will be to the church to which it is offered.

D. Toward More Dynamic Cooperation in Mission

The changes we have proposed above in the relationships between the Commission and the related churches, together with the reduction of Commission and church involvement in the support of medical and educational institutions, have one primary objective: to make it possible for *mission* to come back into the center of the life of each church and into a central place in our relationships, and thus make it possible for our churches to regain the initiative in the missionary outreach in our present dynamic society. As this happens, we will find ourselves at the beginning of a new period in our relationships in which our growing involvement in missionary projects will determine new forms for these relationships. We would mention here a few of these areas in which we believe new developments should take place:

1. *The multilateral approach to mission.* As we have seen above, the provision of resources, both personnel and funds, exclusively to a particular church within an area may result in the smothering of missionary response within the receiving church, foster disunity within the area, lead to the neglect of strategic frontiers of mission, and contribute to a general loss of ecumenical vision on the part of both giving and receiving churches. In order to avoid these ill effects of unilateral approach to mission, we recommend that the Commission study and work out, in consultation with the related churches, as the occasion permits, a multilateral approach to mission within a wider context than that of a single church, country, or confession.

This can express itself in a variety of ways. The Theological Education Fund is an example of such an approach in one specific area. Many churches contributed to one fund for strengthening seminaries around the world, and the committee responsible for its administration was able to study the needs of the churches on three continents and discover how to strengthen their work in this field. Similar experiments might be carried out in other fields of special urgency, such as in new approaches to students or industrial workers, or encounter with other faiths. This might also provide a solution to the problem of support of certain major educational and medical institutions as part of a plan by which their future would be studied and new ways found to support them.

The most important area here is that of multilateral approach to mission in a geographical or cultural area. By such an approach, mission boards and churches working in that area might study and plan together in such a way that all personnel and funds from abroad could be used in a coordinated advance in mission. The Commission would have to maintain constant liaison with that area, but once personnel and funds were made available, the decisions regarding their use would be made by the cooperative body.

While this offers interesting possibilities for united advance in mission, it is most important that no large administrative structures should develop which will absorb funds and personnel and make the administration of mission even more complex than it now is. The regional cooperative body should exist only to study the needs of the whole area and work out specific plans for advance. After this has been done, and personnel and funds distributed, the administrative responsibilities involved should be taken care of by the local church bodies within whose bounds they are used.

2. The development of new missionary communities and cooperation among such groups. One of the most important developments in the church today is the recognition that the mission of the church must be entrusted to the church. It is a responsibility of the whole church. This does not exclude the existence of special groups which become a focus for this missionary concern. On the contrary, the church will probably be able to fulfill its responsibility in mission only if there are such groups throughout its life which serve not only as the instruments of missionary outreach, but also as a reminder, to the whole church, of its missionary vocation. The Commission on Ecumenical Mission and Relations represents this point of concentration in the United Presbyterian Church. We believe that as the younger churches are freed for greater missionary advance, such groups will develop throughout their life, as has already begun to happen in several churches. It is of the utmost importance that the Commission should have some relationship with groups of this type as they develop, for they may well become the center of the most dynamic concern for mission as it develops around the world. It is also groups such as these which should be in contact with the American

church and which might be able to make the greatest contribution to its renewed concern for its mission in America and beyond.

3. *The Preservation of Flexibility in Mission.* In the dynamic society in which we live today, it is of the utmost importance that a certain degree of flexibility be preserved in the relationships between the Commission and the churches related to it. In the Body of Christ we are members one of another. This fact must be central in the relationship between mother and daughter churches. But our obedience as members of this Body requires that our relationships be constantly renewed in order to free us for mission, that they not become means of ecclesiastical control which can hinder mission, nor prevent us from keeping up with the development of events in the world in which we live. Partnership in obedience can always become partnership in disobedience in the face of our missionary calling. All members of the Body have the responsibility to see that this does not happen. We believe that care should be taken at the present time to see that flexibility is preserved so that new forms of church life and of inter-church relationships in mission can constantly appear.

E. *Changes in Commission Administration*

The significance of the principles set forth in this study, as they apply to the work and structure of the Commission, will be apparent only as they develop. However, we believe that three major conclusions are in order at this time:

1. As the younger churches grow in maturity and as ways are found for greater cooperation on the regional level in study and planning, we believe that there should be a gradual transfer of administrative responsibilities to these regions, and thus a considerable degree of decentralization. We believe that the regional secretaries should spend more time on the field, in contact with churches and regional organizations, and that there should be a gradual transfer of decisions on the use of personnel and funds and on general missionary strategy to the local or regional bodies. The Commission would then concentrate more on world-wide strategy in ecumenical mission and relations and be a channel by which resources are made available from one church to another.

2. We are of the opinion that the work of the functional secretaries should also be re-examined. If one of the churches related to the Commission needs assistance in its program of evangelism, Christian Education, or youth work, it should be able to enter into contact with those agencies of the American church engaged in such work. In this case, the functional secretaries should be closely related to these agencies, perhaps serving on their staff. It might also be possible to unite some of the operations of the functional offices with similar operations within the administrative framework of like-minded churches, or use existing cooperative and ecumenical organizations.

3. The activity of the Commission within The United Presbyterian

Church in the U.S.A. aims at the involvement of the entire church and all her agencies in world-wide mission, thus enabling the church to live up to her calling to be a missionary community. We believe that the development of the missionary character of the whole church is a most important part of the task of the Commission and should be encouraged in every way possible.

III. Developing the Wider Relationships

From Mutual Recognition to Reunion

Because there is one Lord, there is only one mission and one Church. This is a challenge to all those Christian churches who confess Jesus Christ as God and Saviour, Lord of history, and Head of the Church. However, if all churches are challenged in the same fashion we must at this point make a distinction for practical purposes between those which are related to the ecumenical movement and those which until now are not. The ecumenical movement is an historical reality in the life of the church. All those who have entered it either through membership in the World Council of Churches or through participation in the International Missionary Council, or through any other positive relationship with the organizations embodying the ecumenical movement, have assumed a responsibility toward one another, have established themselves in a new relationship with one another, and have made a pledge to one another concerning the future. It is, therefore, necessary for the Commission, which is integrally involved in the ecumenical movement, to consider its relations with Christian churches or groups inside the ecumenical movement separate from its relations with churches and groups outside the ecumenical movement.

A. Relations with churches and missionary bodies within the ecumenical movement.

One of the best formulas defining their relations which ought to unite those churches, missionary societies, and other Christian bodies inside the ecumenical movement was spelled out at the Faith and Order Conference held in Lund, Sweden in 1952: We should do together all things which our Christian conscience does not compel us to do separately. This is to say that the burden of the proof should lie on the advocates of division and separation, not on those of unity. Unity is normal, and separate action, without speaking of competition, is not only abnormal but scandalous. This is not to say that separate churches should act together as if they were one, but because they recognize that they are one already in spite of remaining divisions. To make this formula work it is necessary never to take it for granted; the normal tendency of churches which are still separate is to act separately and it calls for constant effort of attention and self-examination to avoid following the easy way of separate roads. It must become a practice for all churches each time they make a decision or undertake a project to examine

whether there is any justification, theological or practical, not to do it with other churches. And it is indispensable to be very self-demanding in the study of these justifications for separatism.

1. Obstacles to Unity

There are indeed many obstacles on the way to mission unity.

a. Denominational institutionalism is the most common and perhaps the most insidious temptation of churches to continue working separately, but concern for self-perpetuation of an organizational structure or proselytism for the sake of membership statistics are destructive, not only of true unity but also of mission.

b. Confessionalism, i.e. emphasis on the essential importance of doctrinal correctness as defined by an historical confessional faith of the church in question, and refusal to cooperate on another basis than that particular doctrinal confession, takes a new importance at the present juncture. Regional and world confessional bodies, coming into existence in recent years, may temporarily serve a useful missionary and ecumenical purpose as they become a step to wider understanding and relationships. However, their very value can become nullified where there is over-emphasis on doctrinal correctness, which indirectly tends to minimize the exclusive dependence of the church on the initiative of Jesus Christ. When this happens, the church is in danger of being considered not only as the Body of Christ, but also as an association of Christians agreeing together theologically. Confessional divisions, a product of the western world, often have accompanied missionary zeal. Among Christians in many of the younger church areas there is a strong feeling toward church reunion; it is more often in official ecclesiastical circles, both national and missionary, that resistance comes.

c. This is closely connected with the obstacle represented by the perpetuation, in spite of all measures of integration and recognition of the independence of the younger churches, of a parent-child relationship between churches which have historically been related by missionary expansion. On one side, younger churches often resist the very idea of sharing with other churches in the same area, resources they have traditionally received from the parent church in the West; thus falling into the "one child" mentality. On the other side, Western churches often feel a sort of right of property over younger churches which have historically been born from their missionary work and try to keep these younger churches from contacts with anybody else. In both cases this sort of attitude amounts to denying that Jesus Christ, the Lord of all, has freely given himself to all. It is, therefore, destructive both of mission and unity.

d. Ecumenism itself is fraught with dangerous potentialities. If it is perverted into an effort for unity in order to achieve greater power, influence, or effectiveness in a human sense of the term, if it becomes synonymous with centralization, streamlining, and uniformity, if it leads

in any way to a "super-church," it becomes destructive of mission and also of true unity.

e. Idolatrous nationalism represents one of the permanent obstacles both to mission and to unity. Protestant Churches need at this point to feel repentant. The Reformation of the Sixteenth Century did not invent ecclesiastical nationalism, but it spread it out and made it almost a characteristic of church life. It has come to the point where nobody seems even to raise the question of the ultimate reason why churches should be organized in all cases along the national pattern, within the borders of particular nations. Even when that situation does not develop into a blessing of purely secular national interests against those of other countries, it prevents churches from any real understanding of the oneness and catholicity of the church and it perverts "foreign" missions, as was too often the case in past periods, into an instrument of imperialism. Though the problem does not seem to have arisen as yet, a similar danger might threaten the new regional church councils which grow in different parts of the world, were they to become self-contained and separatist.

2. *Overcoming the Obstacles*

Achievement of unity in mission, once the obstacles are overcome or at least noted as threats for the future, calls for an effort which will develop itself in various stages.

a. The minimal sort of relationship between separate churches in the ecumenical movement is mutual recognition as authentic parts of the Body of Christ and the mutual respect which goes together with that recognition.

b. While we affirm that the proclamation of the gospel must always be the primary concern of the church, agreement needs to be made to refrain from sheep-stealing and proselytism, which is not only destructive of unity by provoking tension between churches, but implies also a false understanding of the unity of the church and of its mission in the world.

c. After these first negative agreements, positive cooperation begins. It will take the form especially of:

- mutual intercession;
- mutual correction by which the churches try to help one another to be more faithful in their life and mission, not in the spirit of condemnation but of love;
- mutual assistance by which the churches try to help one another through whatever resources they have in personnel or money in the fulfillment of their respective tasks;
- common study in which churches try to learn together from God's revelation and from their respective experience to what tasks they are called;

- common programs in all fields where it is possible, e.g., social welfare, children's education, and youth work;
- common mission, especially in fields yet untouched by either of the churches involved;
- common worship, first on special occasions (e.g., World Day of Prayer), and gradually as a more and more normal practice;
- exchange of personnel in all areas of the life of the church where this may be profitable.

Relations with Orthodox Churches. Particular attention needs to be given to our relationship with churches in the Orthodox tradition. The United Presbyterian Church and many of the related younger churches witness and serve as missionary communities within countries where Orthodox Churches constitute the major Christian group. Although the original intention of the initiation of missionary outreach within these countries was the communication of the gospel to non-Christians, various and complex circumstances have made the record of relationships with Orthodox Churches all too often one of recrimination, with charges of proselytism on one hand and of centuries-old neglect of evangelism on the other. That this has occurred within the countries of the Middle East, where the majority of the population are Muslim believers, claiming and experiencing some sense of brotherhood within Islam, has only served to heighten and underscore the harmful effects of disunity within the Body of Christ.

A number of developments are encouraging. Our churches hold common membership in the World Council of Churches, and thus are able to enter into conversations at world level. Regional ecumenical bodies welcome Orthodox Churches into membership, giving increased opportunity to Orthodox Churches to join with others in facing their common responsibility as missionary communities. Increase in contacts with Orthodox Christians on the local level in many places leads in the same direction.

Selection by the Office for Studies in the Commission of the subject of the life and work of the Orthodox Churches as a major area of concern opens the way for increased understanding and appreciation of the rich treasures which these ancient communions have to share with us and others within the fellowship of the ecumenical movement.

B. *Relations with Ecumenical Organizations*

1. The World Council of Churches and the International Missionary Council who are to integrate at the end of 1961 into one single World Council of Churches, historically represent the participation of churches and their missionary instruments in the ecumenical movement. All efforts must be made to bring into their fellowship all churches of Jesus Christ. This cannot be achieved without a systematic and patient effort of ecumenical education explaining both the biblical and theological basis of ecumenism and the way in which the World Council of Churches

and the International Missionary Council try to be faithful to it and avoid the various dangers which might threaten them.

2. Regional councils such as the East Asia Christian Conference, the Near East Christian Council, and the All Africa Church Conference in the process of formation, offer a particularly promising structure. They allow cooperation among churches to take place above the denominational level in a cultural area where basically similar problems of indigenization are present. By their very nature they avoid that form of cooperation which is found exclusively along the former lines of dependence uniting mother and daughter churches. Thus it is of primary importance to give all possible support to these bodies, to educate churches to find in them natural instruments of cooperation and progress toward union, and to give to these regional conferences the necessary means of action without, however, loading them with the burden of financial resources out of proportion with the situation of churches in the region.

3. National councils of churches fulfill in many countries a similar function to that of the World Council of Churches and the International Missionary Council at the world level.

4. Local councils of churches in a single community provide not only fellowship with fellow Christians, but a significant opportunity for united witness.

5. Ad hoc forms of cooperation can and should be constituted for particular projects. The Theological Education Fund, set up in 1957, is an example.

6. One of the most normal forms of cooperation between separate churches should be the entrusting to one by all others the task to be done on behalf of all.

In addition to all the above forms, we should mention effective union of churches until then separate. In a sense, it would be better to speak of reunion to emphasize that as a result of it the church recovers the unity which is its by nature. This reunion implies that participating parties make a common act of faith in the form of a confessional statement, however simple it may be, that they have common order and sacraments, and that they assume together the same mission. Such reunions have taken place in recent years, especially among younger churches, but they are under consideration between different denominations everywhere in the world. We can only be grateful for this great change and urge all churches to study possibilities of such reunion and to pray for it. Reunion is not something to be postponed until after we have come to know one another very well and to be satisfied entirely about one another's faith and structures; it is a gift of God for which we must pray and which we must grasp as quickly as possible without being afraid of the dangers involved or the sacrifices which must be made.

It is to be remembered that nothing calls for church union to take place solely within a national framework. There are possibilities for

further study: in small neighboring countries the reunion of several churches across national boundaries; the further development of regional churches in very large lands. In all of this the concern should be that the churches as administrative organs will remain human communities of effective witness to their Lord.

C. *Relations with Churches outside the Ecumenical Organizations*

It is not possible to give expression to convictions held with respect to our relationships with churches and groups of Christians outside the ecumenical organizations without making a correlative statement concerning our concept of our basic freedom for witness and evangelism in every situation and the accompanying temptation to proselytism. This subject has been carefully studied by a committee of the World Council of Churches and the International Missionary Council. We recommend that this report be studied, as it represents the thought and experience of a widely representative group of churches.

Our starting point is the fact that we are called to preach the gospel in season and out of season and to witness to Jesus Christ in all our contacts and relationships with Christians and non-Christians alike. It is through this proclamation of the Living Word that we are all mutually strengthened in our faith and grow to maturity as members of the Body of Christ. When the gospel is preached to all some will be reached who, though claimed by a particular church, have had no vital faith in Christ and are led to a new relationship with him. When this happens such persons may desire to join another church as they find a new spiritual home in which their faith and witness are strengthened. This problem may be especially acute in areas where historically culture and faith have become identified and in which, while it is still valid to assume a continuity of culture, it is no longer valid to assume a continuity of faith.

This central emphasis upon evangelism does not give license for proselytism which gives greater importance to the change of ecclesiastical relationship than to any other factor. Proselytism is fundamentally an attempt to pass judgment upon other Christians and churches, which judgment only God can make. Evangelism is fundamentally a presentation of Christ in the conviction that all should hear the gospel and that those who have not come to a vital faith in Jesus Christ should be persuaded to accept this gift.

Only when we respect the difference between these two activities, condemning the false presumptions of proselytism and recognizing the validity and centrality of evangelism, can we find the proper relationships for the expression of our unity in Christ.

1. *Roman Catholic Church.* The Roman Catholic Church is outside the ecumenical movement of which we have been speaking. Its own conception of the unity of the church does not seem to leave any possibility of hope of reunion with other churches, since its traditional

belief is that the Roman Catholic Church is the only church and that reunion can only take the form of a return to Rome. However, the situation has changed greatly within the last few years. Not only are cases of persecution becoming less frequent, but promising conversation takes place at all levels between Protestants, Anglicans, Orthodox, and Roman Catholics. The following factors seem to contribute to this change:

— the Roman Catholic Church, like other churches, is going through a very deep biblical and theological renewal which cannot but lead to a great many changes in its life and action.

— the recognition of the fact that in many areas Christianity is losing ground to secular ideologies and resurgent ancient religions has startled the Roman Catholic Church, as well as other churches, and compelled it to rethink its situation in the world, its ethical conception, and its missionary methods.

— contacts with Christians of other confessions as well as the other factors mentioned, have strengthened the development of an ecumenical movement within the Church of Rome. The calling of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council and the establishment of a Secretariat for promoting Christian unity are indications of a very important change in the attitude of the Roman Catholic Church toward other churches, and this change seems irreversible.

In this connection, the doors are open much more than has been the case before for positive relations among Protestant, Anglican, Orthodox, and Roman Catholic churches. These contacts have already taken the form of conversations between theologians and others competent in different fields of church life, especially the missionary field. They also take the form of mutual intercession and even in some cases common prayer, and it should be noted that requests for such contacts very often come from Roman Catholics. All efforts should be made to accept such requests and to multiply such contacts wherever possible. When local circumstances or the memory of past persecution make them impossible, the churches should be educated about the reason for and the possibility of these contacts. It should be noted that in some cases joint missionary efforts have been undertaken by Roman Catholics and other churches, not on any basis of compromise or vagueness, but with a full recognition of the serious divergences still separating us. It is impossible to overestimate the missionary significance of such conversations and cooperation.

2. *Independent and Sectarian Groups.* Those groups which represent theologically the most "conservative" Protestantism and ecclesiologically the most "free church" conception, play a very considerable and growing role in the total missionary enterprise. It is difficult to make a list of all shades and varieties they include; they go from aggressive sects to non-denominational missionary societies and fundamentalist

elements within missionary bodies of churches which are members of the World Council of Churches.

It seems that the basic differences between the perspective of the ecumenical movement and that of these groups and churches lie in two areas: the conception of the church and the understanding of the mission of the church. For these groups, the church is recognized to be the Body of Christ, but is defined by the purity and correctness of its faith and doctrine rather than by the fact that it is gathered together by Jesus Christ. The mission of the church is considered by them essentially as the effort to bring out of a world destined to damnation as many souls as possible; any concern with the social and political responsibility of the Christian is considered as marginal to the mission of the church.

In the face of this difference of perspective much misunderstanding arises and both sides fall prey to Phariseism and lack of charity. On our part we often look down upon them as divisionists and fanatics. We tend to underestimate their missionary zeal and to pass judgment upon their faith, conversion, and Christian life. On the other hand, they misunderstand the ecumenical movement and repudiate ecumenism on the ground of principle or at least of practice.

Because of misunderstandings and divergencies between these ecumenical and anti-ecumenical groups, cooperation and unity with them appears very difficult, and in some cases the lack of brotherly love has led to open competition and hostility.

We should in all humility recognize that our contacts with these groups, even when difficult, may play a beneficial role in our own Christian witness through pointing up some of our defects and neglects as we attempt to present a whole gospel to a whole humanity. For this we must be grateful.

Above all else we must remember the commandment of Jesus: "love one another; as I have loved you, so you are to love one another. If there is this love among you, then all will know that you are my disciples" (John 13:34-35).

Such love should take form in objective efforts toward contacts, cooperation, and better understanding with them. Whether we agree or disagree, we are one in the eyes of God and as members of the Body of Christ. Therefore, even if we wished, we could not break our real relationship together.

Cooperation should aim, in the first place, at: study of all points of tension, with a view to alleviate the situation; theological conversation on matters of disagreement; and prayer for and with one another. Our first aim in relationships should be to achieve mutual respect. If cooperation turns out to be possible, it should be cooperation for a constructive purpose, based on the recognition of our unity and not mere association to fight against a third party.

D. A unity open to the world

Ecumenical unity cannot be worked out with non-Christians, since it is founded in Jesus Christ and manifest in Jesus Christ to the world. But in Jesus Christ we know that all men are included in the unity which Christ wishes for his Church; non-Christians also are potentially members of the church. On the other hand, we know that Jesus Christ, Lord of history, is at work also among non-Christians in their religions and ideologies, in their efforts and expectations. Encounter with non-Christians is, therefore, a requirement of our Christian faith, not only for the sake of witness in mission, but also because of the unity of the church which is a unity willed for the world. This is to say that our missionary approach to the non-Christian world must have constantly an ecumenical quality, not only with regard to the relation between separate churches involved in mission but also with regard to the attitude of Christians toward non-Christians.

We are called to be bearers of the love of Jesus Christ and to proclaim that love. It is the Holy Spirit who retains the prerogative of conversion. Nevertheless, it is the love of Christ in our hearts that compels us not only to love but also to long that all people may know the great joy of the gospel. This motivation directs us to love all people for their own sake as they are, recognizing them as brothers in spite of and within their unbelief. This means that to get acquainted, to help, to serve, and to love is necessary preparation for the proclamation of the Good News. Although circumstances may limit the extent to which this may take place, the absence of sympathetic understanding and loving concern for the person to whom we speak, renders preaching ineffective. In announcing the message of reconciliation of Jesus Christ, we must be truly reconciled with those to whom we bring it. It may be that one of the great mistakes of the churches in their missionary work has been to bypass genuine friendship and to go straight to preaching. This may have contributed to what looks like a failure of the Christian mission in many confrontations with other religions. We also think that the churches are in danger of committing similar errors in their missionary encounter with secular ideologies and cultural groups. We are grateful for new experimentation undertaken to effect reconciliation in the Muslim world in such a way that the gospel can be received. An example of this is the IMC project of study of Islam in Africa, South of the Sahara.

Finally, our openness to the world should be reflected in our own communal life. A church which falls into any kind of Phariseeism contradicts the gospel of Jesus Christ. The Christian community must be a community welcoming all men as they are, giving them a place in the Christian family, and demonstrating the unity of Christ to which we invite them.

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